

# The Romance of Western Canada

R. G. MACBETH

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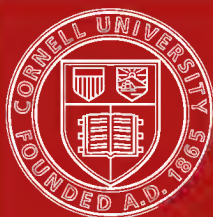
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# THE ROMANCE OF WESTERN CANADA

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*By* R. G. MACBETH

Author of

"The Selkirk Settlers in Real Life."

"The Making of the Canadian West."

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TORONTO  
WILLIAM BRIGGS  
1918

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## INTRODUCTION

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BY HIS GRACE THE MOST REVEREND S. P. MATHESON, D.D.,  
Archbishop of Rupert's Land.

As President of the Lord Selkirk Association, I represent a Society, the principal object of which is to keep green and vivid the memory of the intrepid band of pioneers from Scotland who came out at the beginning of the last century and settled upon the banks of the Red River of the North, near where the City of Winnipeg now stands. No nobler or more indomitable contingent of colonists ever crossed the seas to carve out for themselves homes in a new and far-distant land than were the men, and the women, too, who comprised the various groups brought out by Lord Selkirk at that time. It is only necessary to read the history of the first few years of the Settlement to realize the unspeakably severe trials and difficulties which they were called upon to encounter—difficulties from fire and flood, and grasshoppers and conflicts between rival Trading Companies. The wonder is that they did not pull up stakes, abandon the place and seek better conditions elsewhere. But no, they had the unflinching and invincible spirit of Scottish

## *Introduction*

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Highlanders, who look upon difficulties as the opportunities of the strong, with the result that they carried on against all hindrances until they had caused "the land that was desolate" in this new Kildonan to become "like the Garden of Eden." It is natural that, as a lineal descendant of those early colonists and as an officer of the Society which exists to perpetuate the memory of their deeds, I should cordially welcome the publication of a book which deals with their history. I have great pleasure, therefore, in writing this Introduction to the "Romance of Western Canada," and in commending the book to a wide circle of readers. My chief reason for doing this is, of course, my warm loyalty to forbears of whose deeds, character and traditions I am justly proud. But I have another reason, which is this: The author, as the son of one of the original settlers, born and bred, educated and trained in the old Red River Colony, possesses rare qualifications for writing, not only with first-hand knowledge, but with sympathy and personal touch, of the events which he describes. I heartily commend the book.

S. P. RUPERT'S LAND,  
*President,*  
*Lord Selkirk Association.*

Bishop's Court, Winnipeg,  
April 12, 1918.

## FOREWORD

---

BY SIR JOHN WILLISON.

FOR this story of Western Canada posterity will be grateful, and we of this generation will read and praise, and perhaps realize more fully that there is heroic romance in the far past of our history. It is written with vigor and decision, and carries the authority of research and knowledge. For such a task Rev. R. G. MacBeth has peculiar qualifications. As he tells us, his father came out with Lord Selkirk's third group of settlers in 1815, and he was born in the Selkirk Colony before Confederation. Nowhere else have we such an intimate story of the long conflict between the rival fur companies or such a clear revelation of the characteristics of those brave and enduring adventurers who held the West for the British Crown and laid the foundations of a Commonwealth in loneliness and sacrifice, in sweat and blood.

As we read the story of the Selkirk Colony and the Hudson's Bay Company and think of Prince Rupert and his Adventurers, we realize how much of Scottish spirit and Scottish energy were inwoven in the beginnings of

Western Canada. So, indeed, it was in Ontario, and even in Quebec, where so many Scottish names are borne by those who speak the French tongue. Lord Rosebery once said that "if Scotland were not great the Empire of all the Britons would not stand where it does," and a writer in one of the leading English journals, dealing with Lord Rosebery's statement, said: "The peculiar point about Wallace and all the Scotch heroes is that the most English of us are all on the Scotch side when their names are mentioned. For them we are as aggressively patriotic as though we belonged to the smaller nationality. In reading their history we become traitors to the English cause. We are caught by the glamor of the romance. It is a reversion of sentiment probably unique in history. Our sympathies all go astray directly we touch the Scottish story. From childhood our romance is Scotch, and it is all the doing of the great Scotch writers that our patriotism is perverted." The writer goes on to speak of the Scotch as "a separate and distinct people, so small, yet so full of character, so valuable in the history of the whole Empire and the world."

This is very true of Scotland. In a wider sense this is true also of Britain. Britain's dead heroes become the objects of the world's veneration. Britain's living heroes are too often the objects of the world's suspicion. As

England fought Scotland and Scotland did not yield, so the world has fought Britain and Britain has not faltered. Hence, as the English take the great ones of Scotland to the heart, so the great ones of Britain lie close to the heart of mankind. In the history of the West Prince Rupert has no significance. In so far as he has any relation to Canada he is only an Adventurer. The fact that he and his associates once had a potential sovereignty over all that wide land we take as legend rather than as fact. One feels, too, that, sober of spirit and stern of heart as were the Scottish Puritans of the Selkirk Colony, like all the race, deny it as they may, they had a vagrant love for the Stuarts.

Mr. MacBeth devotes luminous chapters to the rebellion in the Red River Territory, the unhappy adventure of Hon. William Macdougall, the high conduct of Louis Riel and his Provisional Government. He does not find any explanation for Joseph Howe's visit to Red River just before the Western Country was to come under Canadian sovereignty. Howe explained nothing; accomplished nothing. Mr. MacBeth does not reject the notion that he was in actual sympathy with the restless half-breeds. In the House of Commons on May 9th, 1870, Howe made an extended defence of his mission and conduct. He declared that when he became Secretary of State

he thought it necessary to acquire a more exact knowledge of feeling in the Red River country. For that purpose he had gone west, and to that object he had devoted himself. He said that he had discovered a strong reluctance among the people to accept Macdougall as Governor, but insisted that he had defended Macdougall and sought to dispel suspicion and hostility. He had not been favorably impressed by those who were described as the "loyal people of the Territory." They had, in his opinion, the same characteristics as the "loyal people" who had caused rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada. He had held that the Imperial Government should have opened the Northwest Territories to settlement, assumed the responsibility of government and ultimately organized the country as a British Province. He thought the burden thrown upon Canada was too heavy, but when he joined the Canadian Government he had accepted its policy. He had been loyal to his colleague, had not sought to embarrass Macdougall and had had no doubtful relations with the rebellious element in the Red River territory. It is doubtful if the explanation greatly improves Howe's position, although any suspicion that he was in actual sympathy with Riel cannot be fairly entertained. The Red River settlers were not well handled. There was no sympathetic, intelligent preparation for the transfer of the



territory to Canada. But for that Macdougall was not mainly responsible, and one feels that while not very wise himself in the course which he pursued he suffered chiefly for the neglect and ineptness of other people. Sir Charles Tupper also went West at the time in concern for his daughter, who was the wife of one of Macdougall's staff. But no mystery surrounds his movements. He boldly faced Riel's Council, and we may be certain that in the interview which he had with Father Richot, unquestionably in league with Riel and the Provisional Government, he spoke as bluntly as he talked to Howe when Nova Scotia had to be reconciled to Confederation.

In the words "the wanton murder of Thomas Scott," Mr. MacBeth reveals his attitude towards an event which did much to destroy a Government in Ontario and struck Sir John Macdonald in many constituencies in the general election of 1872. The Hudson's Bay Company is acquitted of any complicity in the Red River rising. Mr. MacBeth emphasizes "the remarkable sagacity of Sir John Macdonald" in choosing Donald A. Smith as Commissioner from Canada to overcome disorder and adjust grievances. He will not admit that Archbishop Taché had any authority to proclaim a general amnesty, and he produces strong evidence to support his position. In the book there are some striking portraits and

much of interesting and picturesque incident. Of John Schultz and John Norquay he writes with sympathy and understanding. Schultz, who had heroic quality, has receded too far into the background of Canadian history.

Mr. MacBeth also has chapters on the North-west Rebellion of 1885 and the struggle, if the word be not too strong, for responsible government in the Territories. There was delay as the exigencies of Governments demanded, but there never was danger of any denial of legislative autonomy to the Middle Western Provinces. He touches with discretion, but with decision, on that provision of the Autonomy Acts of 1895, which imposed Separate Schools upon Saskatchewan and Alberta, emphasizes the influences which inspired the legislation and at least suggests the long results of the controversy. One is glad to find that Mr. MacBeth pays tribute to Sir Frederick Haultain and Hon. James H. Ross. Although Haultain was a Conservative and Ross a Liberal they co-operated to give the Western Territories singularly economical and efficient government, and no other men did so much to establish sound political traditions in Western Canada.

At least as interesting and romantic as those chapters which trace the growth of settlement and development in the Prairie Provinces is that which goes back to the early explorers of the Pacific and the romantic beginnings of

British Columbia. Here, again, the story is Scottish. Over all is the glory of Scottish adventure and Scottish endurance. Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson and Campbell all savor of Scotland, and we think again of Lord Rosebery's fancy and Scotland's genius. A portrait of singular interest is that of Sir Matthew Begbie, who in unsettled and sometimes turbulent conditions gave to British law on the Pacific an authority which no one dared defy and a practical equity which no one could dispute.

Valuable chapters describe the religious and educational institutions of the West and the processes by which they have developed. Here, too, are names which had the respect of their own generation and will command the reverence of posterity. All through the book Mr. MacBeth is tolerant and judicial. He seeks no ground of quarrel, and rarely imputes doubtful motives. The book is by no means colorless, but the writer thinks of what has been achieved and is grateful. He refuses to stir the ashes of old controversies or to obscure the achievements of great men by too much grieving about faults which are common to us all.

But it is not my purpose to follow Mr. MacBeth's vivid story of the birth and growth of Western Canada. It is as vital that we of the East should know Western Canada as that our history and our spirit should be rightly

understood in the West and truly interpreted to its people. That East is East and West is West would be unwise teaching for the Commonwealth. As no one can fully comprehend the dignity and the responsibility of British citizenship until he has visited the Mother Islands, stood in the Abbey and in St. Paul's, touched hands with Britain's mighty past, and felt the very presence of the infinite forces which beat and throb in the marvellous life of old London or in such great industrial communities as Manchester and Birmingham and Glasgow, so one cannot know the significance of Canada and Canadian citizenship until he has crossed the wide plains of the West and has seen the pioneers of many tongues and races setting ever outward the landmarks of British civilization.

A vast new land half wakened to the wonder  
Of mighty strength; great level plains that hold  
Unmeasured wealth and the prophetic thunder  
Of triumphs yet untold.

A land of eager hearts and kindly faces  
Lit by the glory of a newborn day,  
Where every eye seeks the far distant places  
Of an untravelled way.

Oh, generous land; oh, mighty inspiration  
That floods the morning of the world to be.  
Thy people are the builders of a nation  
Lofty, benignant, free.

## PREFACE

---

AFTER fifty years of Confederation it seems specially desirable that we should examine the foundations of Canada, trace the lines of her development and preserve some authentic record of the real life of the Canadian people. This task can only be accomplished by those who have personal and first-hand knowledge of the various sections of our broad Dominion and who are in sympathy with their past struggles as well as their future aspirations.

With that portion of Canada which lies westward from the Red River country, the scene of the old Selkirk Colony, I have been intimate ever since childhood. In that colony I was born before Confederation. It has been my privilege to witness all the movements that have taken place since that period, including the transition from the old conditions to the new, when the wide West became part of the Dominion. It is of Western Canada, then, that I purpose to write. The book that follows, while giving a succinct account of the rise and progress of the country, may not be regarded as a complete compendium of details, because my aim is not a dry encyclopædia but a living, reminiscent history of the people. In arranging

## *Preface*

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this book I have simply gone back and lived again through the moving past. I have felt the touch of vanished hands and have listened again to the sound of voices that are gone, and what I have seen and heard out of the circling years, I have sought to knit to the present hour and write in this volume. It is a humble contribution to the history of the western country, in which my parents were amongst the very earliest settlers. It is the land I have humbly tried to serve, both as a civilian and a soldier: a land whose achievements will grow ever greater with the progress of time. For it should be remembered that the Canadian West has little more than begun a great history. We who have lived here always have but heard

. . . The tread of pioneers,  
Of empires yet to be;  
The first low wash of waves where yet  
Shall roll a human sea.

And it is hoped that for the thousands who have come into the West, and for the myriads more who shall yet come, the following record of the formative periods of its history, by one who has lived through them, may be of some interest and value.

R. G. MACBETH.

Vancouver, B.C., January, 1918.

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# THE ROMANCE OF WESTERN CANADA

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## CHAPTER I.

### *THE DAWN OF THE WEST.*

MOUNDS and graves and totem-poles and weird legends reveal something concerning conditions in the illimitable west-land before the advent of the white man with his higher civilization. But by reason of there being no written language in those days they must be classed amongst prehistoric times in so far as records are concerned. Those of us who were born in this country when as yet things were in a very primitive condition, and who grew up in a little white oasis surrounded on all sides by aboriginal tribes, gathered many a strange story at Indian camp-fires; and so we can help the imagination of others to play backwards into the past and see what existed when everyone was

Free as when Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

We are not amongst those who say that the former times are better than ours, because

we realize that in the minds of full-blooded men "fifty years of Europe" are more to be desired than "a cycle of Cathay." But those old days on the great plains and amid the eternal hills towards the setting sun were wonderful enough. By the mistake of early discoverers, who imagined that they had reached India when they had touched the American coast, the aboriginal inhabitants of this continent were called Indians, and, despite all efforts to change the appellation, it remains unto this day. Hence in speaking of them we say that Indians of countless tribes and with a veritable babel of dialects and tongues were once the undisputed lords of this vast western heritage. They had rivalries and wars amongst themselves, but, on the whole, these Indians never sank so low in the moral scale as did many of the natives of other lands. Cruelties were practised, no doubt, but there was a certain chivalry amongst these primitive tribes which was remarkable. They were, in large measure, care-free. Buffaloes and other large game were within easy reach; the lakes and the rivers teemed with fish; skins and furs furnished abundant clothing; while a glorious country, in which they were monarchs of all they surveyed, gave them abundant scope for the development of skill, courage and endurance. We have to admit that, until sad experiences with the unworthy caused them to hold themselves aloof or unfriendly in

relation to white men, the Indians received the newcomers with joy and something akin to worship. But in any event there looks out upon us from those prehistoric days a genuine hospitality and kindness which we are compelled to acknowledge as the gift of the Gitchie-Manitou, or Great Spirit, of whom, as well as of the hereafter, these poor children of the wild seemed to have had a sort of intuitive knowledge.

It is a somewhat curious fact that, just as the early navigators fell into a mistake which led them to call the North American aborigines Indians, so the impression that America was the short road from Europe to India and China lured these same navigators into a long search for a way by water through this continent to the Western Sea. "The North-West Passage" became a slogan with the men who went down to the sea in ships. Hence it was that Henry Hudson, the intrepid sailor, after many attempts, entered the straits and the bay which still bear his name, and thus became the first to tap the vast country now known as North-Western Canada. Like the gallant Franklin in the Arctic regions at a later date and the heroic Scott party at the Antarctic Pole in our own day, Hudson, marooned on an ice-floe, paid for his daring voyage with his life. But he had "opened the Bay," and the names of these fearless men, with countless others of their

type, have a secure place in the traditions of a people who have policed the Seven Seas and made them a safe highway for the nations of the world.

The news of Henry Hudson's exploit travelled by "grape-vine telegraph," as the Indians say, to the eastern seaboard. Here Jacques Cartier, Champlain and the rest, who do not enter into this western story, had made Quebec the starting-point for explorers and traders who were seeking to penetrate westward towards the Great Lakes and the country beyond in the unknown vast. To reach the interior of the continent and then to swing north-westward towards the Bay became the supreme ambition of many an adventurous hunter and trapper. Two young Frenchmen, Radisson and Groseillier, living at Three Rivers in Quebec, became eager to essay the trackless wild. Starting out in 1649, these intrepid and enterprising pathfinders, with varying fortunes, kept steadily at work for nearly two decades. Originally subjects of France, they were so intent on opening up the north-west country that they changed their allegiance several times between France and England, according as these countries encouraged them or otherwise. And so we have the strange spectacle of these indomitable explorers plunging again and again into the wilderness, dragging two unappreciative nations behind

them. They went away beyond Lake Superior and explored towards the Mississippi. Then, hearing more definitely from the Indians about the great inland expanse of sea to the north, they set out from Montreal in 1662 and succeeded in reaching Hudson Bay under the guidance of the "wild Assiniboines." In each succeeding expedition they gathered enormous treasure in furs, and, when they came back to Quebec, they tried to arouse their fellow-countrymen to the wonderful possibilities of the northern trade. Failing in this they went, in disgust, to France, where even their flaming enthusiasm could not awaken any response; but the Duke of Montague, seeing that these men had a great, if somewhat romantic, project in hand, gave them letters of introduction to Prince Rupert in England. That dashing soldier of fortune and buccaneer on the high seas received them with an alacrity that argued kinship of spirit. He himself had not been too strait-laced as to matters of citizenship, but had, with delightful indifference as to the cause, given his sword and his service here and there for a consideration. He posed as the patron of daring enterprises, and, as he practised a wild extravagance that needed revenue, he was glad to have an opportunity of sharing in a project which promised large returns in that regard. At that time he was in high favor with the easy-going Charles II, and, after some

preliminary expeditions had been undertaken, this erratic monarch, in 1670, granted Prince Rupert and a few associates a monopolistic charter which turned over to these adventurers practically half a continent. It was on that account that the vast territory became known as Rupert's Land, a name which survives to this day in the title of the Anglican Archbishop at Winnipeg, and also in the name of the western terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. There was nothing in Prince Rupert's general life and character to deserve special commemoration, but he at least had the enterprise and the dash of romance which made him the man for an undertaking which unlocked the hidden door to a new empire for men.

The charter granted by Charles to Prince Rupert and about a score of associates, who put very little capital into the concern at the outset, was a singularly good piece of literary and legal workmanship, and closed with the words, "Witness ourself at Westminster the second day of May, in the two-and-twentieth year of our reign." The full name of the organization then authorized by King Charles, "of our ample and abundant grace, certain knowledge and mere motion," was "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay," but it has always been known as the Hudson's Bay Company. The charter granted practically sovereign powers



over the vast portion of the American continent drained by streams entering Hudson Bay. Countless efforts were made from time to time to upset this highly monopolistic charter, but it held unshaken throughout two centuries, at the close of which, though the monopoly in trade had become a mere figment, the Canadian Government had to buy out the rights of the Company before entering on possession of the western provinces.

A charter so framed, conferring on the Company directors such extraordinary powers as exclusive trade, the making and enforcing of laws, the building of forts and even the organization of military force—the latter the most astonishing of all—might have easily become a despotic and injuriously tyrannical concern; but, in spite of its dangerous charter, it became a sort of paternal and benevolent system of government. That it did so become is evidenced by the fact that, in two hundred years, with the exception of a few minor disputes over the freedom of trade, there was never a revolt against its authority. But this desirable condition of affairs existed, not because people liked a monopolistic organization, but by reason of the high character of the Company's employees in the North-West. In the hands of men of another type the administration of the Company might have been marred by tyranny and disfigured by

spoliation. But the men of the Company were so uniformly honorable, intelligent, prudent and courteous that they controlled with the tacit consent of the governed. As a specific witness to the high and honorable character of the Company's servants, as they were generally called, it may be stated in our day, when corruption is rife enough, that in the two centuries, although these men were handling in remote posts, without check, tens of thousands in fur values, no case of what is now called graft or embezzlement was ever known. The Union Jack, with the Company's ensign, on fort, canoe, sled or cart became a synonym for fair play. From my childhood I have known these men, factors, traders, explorers and the rest. They were men who read widely in their long winter nights, who made earnest investigation into the resources of the country, who sent specimens from the animal, vegetable and mineral world to enrich scientific institutions and to widen the scope of information for others; and my knowledge of them confirms me in the view that the deciding element in society's welfare is the individual unit. Theoretically, I believe in democracy as against autocracy, but in specific cases the outcome for good or evil to the world will depend on the character of those who administer the system in either case.

The Hudson's Bay Company, then, was fully established in 1670, and followed up the lines

of trade opening up from the Bay to the interior. There being no organized company then opposed to them, the Hudson's Bay men did not find it necessary to go far inland. Everything in the shape of fur came their way, except what could be secured transiently by individual traders from the St. Lawrence, who, from an early date, were pushing westward beyond Lake Superior. While the French king held possession of Quebec, "Coureurs des Bois" and other traders secured licenses from the French Government and went out regardless of the English Company at the Bay. Explorers like Verandrye, who built forts at many western points, went onward into the Saskatchewan country; but up to the year 1742 the Hudson's Bay Company confined their operations to the shores of the inland sea. In that year they moved inwards and established a post up the Albany River. This move was met by more activity on the part of the Montreal traders and so precipitated the era of conflict between the fur companies which waged with considerable fierceness for over half a century. One unexpected result of the conflict was the opening up of the West to colonization, for, though the adventurer and trader may lead the way, it is the colonist that really builds up a country.

## CHAPTER II.

### *FUR TRADERS LOCK HORNS.*

FROM the earliest times the magnets that drew adventurous men to the great North-West were two in number. The first was the gallant, if somewhat quixotic, idea of discovering a north-west passage through the American continent to the Western sea. From the days of Henry Hudson for over two centuries to the period of Sir John Franklin and those who searched in vain for that brave explorer, the effort to cut through, by water, was continued from time to time. Neither treasure nor life was spared, but the net result was not commercial profit. There was a long record of daring devotion to a project which it was thought would be of great benefit to mankind, and there was an accumulation of traditions which had the good effect of inspiring others to duty without regard to financial gain. In my boyhood I knew several old men in the Red River country who had been on these great Arctic exploration voyages. They were living in comparative poverty, but there was an aureole around their grey heads which became inspirational to the younger generation growing up on the frontier. In the eyes of certain

types of utilitarians all these movements were sheer waste, but in reality they have done much to keep heroic ideals before the world.

The other magnet that drew men into the wilds of the North-West was the unprecedented commercial gain in connection with the fur trade. In the language of phrenology the fur trade appealed to the sense of acquisitiveness in mankind. Acquisitiveness is not inherently a bad thing. It may be based fundamentally on the need for making a livelihood, and the need for making a livelihood incites men to work with brain or brawn. Work has been proven, ever since that labor sentence in Eden, to be a means of getting ourselves rid of the temptations which conquer the idler but fall back harmless from the toiler. Perhaps we get nearer to a solution of the industrial problems of the world when we affirm our belief in acquisitiveness tempered by a proper sense of stewardship than when we try to make a world full of spoon-fed people who have lost both incentive and initiative.

I am not prepared to say that the old fur-traders were possessed of a proper sense of stewardship. They were not miserly as a rule; in fact, their fault was a spendthrift prodigality, which is not a desirable trait. But they did have acquisitiveness mingled with love of adventure, and it sent them out on expeditions where risk and endurance were the orders of

the day. Hence, Prince Rupert and his associates organized the Hudson's Bay Company. Hence, the early traders, moving out from the St. Lawrence into the West, became a menace to the old Company by cutting off the Indians from their treks to the Bay with their precious bales of fur. Those Montreal merchants, the Frobishers, Simon McTavish, William McGillivray, and the rest, were tremendously persistent, and by sending out men through the interior, became a strong competitor of the English Company which operated from the Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company, called by many the English Company because its headquarters were in London, felt that something must be done to meet this menace, and so, in 1770, they sent into the interior the famous Hearne, who discovered the Coppermine River. Then when Frobisher, a Montreal trader, built a fort at Sturgeon Lake in the North Saskatchewan, at a point where he could cut the very sinews of the trade to Hudson Bay, the English Company was stabbed broad awake, and answered the challenge by building Fort Cumberland, a few miles away, in 1774. From that date onwards for half a century the conflict between these two sections of the fur-traders was sharp and relentless. The Montreal traders, realizing that organization was necessary, formed themselves into the North-West Fur Company in 1784, and this intensely active concern became

the leading rival of the Hudson's Bay, or English, Company. In fact, the North-West Fur Company waxed so strong that it planted forts all the way through the West to the Pacific, absorbed the X. Y. and other smaller concerns, put John Jacob Astor and his Pacific Fur Company out of business on the Columbia River, and well nigh monopolized the trade of the whole country, apart from the districts near to Hudson Bay. Several things contributed to this extraordinary success of the Montreal Company. Its head office was in Montreal, not in London; hence the directors were more closely in touch with the country and could adjust matters of administration better than a directorate across the sea. Then, too, the North-West Company made its employees shareholders on the profit-sharing plan, while the old Company kept its men on salaries, and not very princely ones at that. Every North-West Company man was working for a business in which he had a direct financial interest. Again, the North-West Company employed Canadians, French-Canadians principally, whose rollicking boat-songs and wild jollifications caught the fancy of the Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company employed chiefly men from the Orkneys and the Highlands, who took some time to get into the ways of the new country. They were hardy and courageous, but somewhat stern and serious, and although they

had the reliable qualities that won out in the long run, they were outclassed for the spurt distance by the semi-wild French-Canadians, who fraternized more with the Indians in the amenities of camp life.

For instance, the annual gathering of the North-West Company at Fort William (so called after William McGillivray, of Montreal) was highly spectacular and convivial. It was the assembling of the leading men of the Company from Montreal who managed the finances, to meet the wintering partners who did the actual trading in furs at the distant posts. From Montreal, in gaudily ornamental canoes, manned by skilful voyageurs, would come the city partners, with a retinue of cooks and butlers and general servant-men, bringing along abundant food and a still more abundant supply of wines and liquors. From the northern posts would come the wintering partners with their Indians, half-breeds and followers, bearing the great bales of furs which were the results of the season's work. There was an immense banqueting-hall near the council chamber at Fort William, and when each day's business was done "there was a sound of revelry by night" which made the welkin ring. Many years ago I witnessed somewhat similar scenes when the Hudson's Bay Company men would return from the boat trip to York Factory. It was a pandemonium revel let loose;



but the descriptions of the annual gathering at Fort William make all others look tame by comparison. Yet in the morning business would be resumed on an absolutely business basis, and the man who came in for highest commendation and promotion was the man who had done most trading. They were a hard-living and hard-drinking lot, but they could be cool as ice in business, for their hard, outdoor, healthful life made them largely immune from the deadly results that would follow such gatherings in the flabby life of our modern day. Once the meeting was over the leading men from Montreal, having received and distributed the profits of the year, betook themselves to their luxurious homes in the city, while the wintering partners, with their semi-savage retainers, repaired again to their distant posts all over the West. Though both the great Companies erred seriously enough in the use of liquor amongst the Indians, the general verdict is that the Montreal Company was much more given to the practice than the older concern.

The North-West Fur Company, in the period under consideration, not only became famous for business energy, but it produced in Alexander Mackenzie one of the most remarkable of explorers. His discovery of the great river in the north which still bears his name, and his wonderful journey across the barrier of the Rockies to the Pacific, stand out amongst the

highest achievements our country has known in that regard. A short time ago, while on a trip through the Peace River country, I examined with great interest the site of the old fort near the famous Peace River Crossing, from which Mackenzie had started by canoe and trail to cross the great mountains and reach the Pacific Ocean; and a few weeks later, coming down the British Columbia coast from Prince Rupert, I felt like saluting as we passed Bella Coola Inlet, with the rock on which Mackenzie had painted, in vermilion and grease, the astonishing inscription, "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, One thousand seven hundred and ninety-three. Lat.  $52^{\circ} 20' 48''$  N." All this I felt in sheer admiration for the vision and daring of the great explorer, although he afterwards strenuously opposed the planting of the Selkirk Colony on the Red River, where I was born. Mackenzie, by his tremendous journey, had opened the "North-West Passage" by land.

An explorer so great demands more than passing notice. Mackenzie, though stated by some to have been born in Inverness, first saw the light in Stornoway, in the Island of Lewis, and was allied to many of the famous in Highland history. When a mere boy he came out to Montreal and soon attracted the attention of the shrewd Scottish merchant-traders who were the founders of the North-West Fur Company.

After a clerk apprenticeship for a few years, he went to the post of Detroit, where his abilities were so conspicuous that he was sent to one of the most difficult and important points in the far Athabasca district. With great enterprise, energy and prudence he carried on and extended the work of the Company throughout the North. He sent out an employee to found a fort on the Peace River, made a swift exploratory trip towards the Arctic, discovering the great river which bears his name, and then went back to the Old Land to fit himself by special study for further explorations. Returning, he started from the fort near the Peace River Crossing, as above stated, and went up towards the sources of that great stream in the fall of 1792. Wintering there, he continued his adventurous and difficult way to the Pacific, with many narrow escapes from death, now at the hands of hostile Indians, now by privation, and from the untold dangers of rapids on rivers and slides in the mountains, and reached the Pacific, as above recorded, within a few weeks of the time when the noted Captain George Vancouver had come to the mainland by water. Mackenzie was only thirty years of age at the time.

After his explorations Mackenzie went east to the annual meeting of the Company at Grande Portage, and though he did not break away openly then, he was in sympathy with

those who dissented from the old *regime* under the somewhat tyrannous rule of Simon McTavish. Later on Mackenzie became head of the X. Y. Company (so called because the old Company labelled its bales "N. W." and the other letters followed in a sort of mockery); but not long afterwards he retired to Scotland, where he married the heiress to the Avoch estates and settled down to the life of a country gentleman. His book on his great exploring tours attracted wide attention, and he was knighted in recognition of his service to the Empire. Somewhat unexpectedly he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-seven years. During all this period the fight between the rival fur companies waxed fiercer as their field of action grew. The struggle between the North-West Fur Company and the X. Y. Company, which was a sort of offshoot, was very bitter, and at times the traders of the one concern violently took furs from the other. Finally the older company absorbed the X. Y., and then the conflict narrowed down again to the two original organizations. The Hudson's Bay Company only reached the Red River country in 1793, the date when Mackenzie, representing the North-Westers, reached the Pacific coast; but once the old Company left the Bay, where for a hundred years it had made trading headquarters, its spread over the West was aggressive and rapid. In fact, the era was fast

approaching when the conflict between these rival fur-trading concerns became so flagrant, open and murderous that the Imperial Government had to exert sharp pressure to prevent a scandalous violation of law and order. In the meantime the Hudson's Bay Company was to begin making real history in the new land through the rise, within the Company, of the Earl of Selkirk as the Apostle of Western Colonization.

## CHAPTER III.

### *A NOBLE COLONIZER.*

WE have been studying the rush of the fur trade, and have seen many with the gold-lust, tintured with love of adventure, undertaking projects for the extension of their enterprises; and it helps us to retain our faith in the disinterestedness of men, to come suddenly across one who stands out with singular unselfishness, striving to ameliorate wrong conditions and staunch the wounds of the world. Such a man I believe the Earl of Selkirk to have been, despite the fact that he was much maligned during his lifetime and received very scant justice in Canadian courts of law; and I base this estimate of this real nobleman, not only on a somewhat careful study of his life and times, but on the personal testimony of some who knew him in the midst of those troublous times, when he was bringing the first settlers into what is now the Canadian West.

My father came out from Sutherlandshire with Lord Selkirk's third group of colonists in the year 1815. He was then twelve years of age, and I, as the youngest of his fourteen children—the child of his old age, as the Scripture expresses it—heard much from him, and others

of his day, concerning the relentless clearance of the Kildonan strath, and the coming of Lord Selkirk to offer the evicted people homes in a new land where tyrannous landlordism would have no place. They remembered distinctly the Earl's visit to his colony on the Red River in 1817. They spoke of his distinguished appearance, the gentleness of his manner, the softness of his voice, and the whole fascinating personality of the man, which drew around him the Indians, who called him "the Silver Chief." It is highly interesting to remember that, amid all the strife which ensued later, the Indians who met Lord Selkirk remained the steadfast friends of his colonists. It is of this man, who came upon the stage of the West as a colonizer, in the midst of the fur-trade conflict, that the present chapter will speak.

In St. Mary's Isle, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, the Earl of Selkirk was born in the year 1771 of the famous Douglas race. One of his forebears, in reply to a question on a certain occasion, said, "Few of my ancestors have died in chambers," and it may be added that they generally had given their lives in defence of weak and needy causes, which they championed against tyranny. One of them gave his life in support of Sir William Wallace. Another was the friend of Robert Bruce who undertook to carry the heart of Bruce to be buried in the Holy Land, and who fell in battle, after

throwing the casket into the ranks of the enemy and crying, "Forward, gallant heart, as thou wert wont; Douglas will follow thee or die." Still another was the famous Archibald "Bell the Cat," whose name was a whole chapter on heroic daring. So the Earl came of a lordly stock, and lived up to its highest record. The democratic Burns had little use for a "birkie ca'd a lord," but he admired the manly Douglasses, for, after meeting in Ayr Lord Daer, who was a brother of our Earl, he wrote:

Nae honest, worthy man need care  
To meet with noble, youthful Daer,  
For he but meets a brother.

A certificate from Burns is good title to real nobility; and it is suggestive of Burns' admiration for the family that he visited at St. Mary's Isle, and, by request at table, wrote the famous "Selkirk Grace."

Our hero, whose name was Thomas Douglas, went, at seventeen, to Edinburgh University, where he formed a close friendship with Sir Walter Scott, whose noble and pathetic-written statement in sympathy with his friend's later anxieties for the Red River colony is one of the classics in consolation literature. Young Douglas, from an early age, was a dreamer of dreams for the amelioration of human ills, and when he succeeded to the Earldom of Selkirk, at the opening of the nineteenth century, set



himself earnestly to the tasks in that direction that opened up in divers ways. Our interest, for the purpose of this history, lies in his self-forgetful devotion to the people of the Highlands, amongst whom he had spent many of his college vacations. The Highlanders attracted him by their picturesqueness, and the Highland traditions appealed to the chivalry and gallantry of his nature. He learned their Gaelic tongue and admired the swing of the kilted men, who were going out in that troublous time to measure swords with the little giant of Corsica; and that recalls the pathos of the situation, for it was while many of the men folk were away fighting under the Iron Duke for the liberties of Europe that their families were driven off their native straths by the relentless landlordism, which considered that sheep would be more profitable on the land than human beings. The landlord could generally find a heartless agent, and my father, though but a child at the time of the "clearances," often spoke of how their few belongings were put out of doors on the Kildonan strath, and how the little shieling was burned lest they would return thither; and yet I recall that the basket-hilt of the sword my grandfather had carried abroad in the service of the Empire was given by him, years afterwards, to be broken up and made into pegs for the spinning-wheels of the settlers on the Red River. The Empire

had not helped his Highland home, but he had never soured.

It was inevitable that the woes of his evicted fellow-countrymen in the Highlands should lie heavy on the heart of the gentle Earl, and it was not long before he came to offer them homes in the Red River country of North America. Thus these humble people, cast out by the landlords, were given the immortal honor of becoming the first settlers in what is now the illimitable Canadian West.

It is a very curious fact that Lord Selkirk's interest in the North-West as a field for immigration had been awakened by the book of explorative travel published in 1801 by Alexander Mackenzie, who, personally and by the Fur Company in which he had served, bitterly opposed the Earl's colonization project. Mackenzie's book was entitled, "Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence, Through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: in the Years 1789 and 1793," and, from the time Lord Selkirk read it, he felt that, in that land, a new Empire might be built for the good of the world. So it came to pass that this philanthropic nobleman had been furnished with ammunition by one who, later on, became an enemy to his colonization plans.

His enthusiasm being tempered by Scotch caution, Lord Selkirk, knowing that the

Hudson's Bay Company controlled the western country, in terms of their charter, sought the advice of able lawyers as to the power of the Company to give titles to land and exercise other important functions in the government of the country. Once satisfied on these points, he proceeded with some friends to buy up a controlling interest in the stock of the Company. At the first meeting of the stockholders thereafter it transpired that Alexander Mackenzie and some of his friends, who were opposed to the colonization plans which Lord Selkirk seemed to be contemplating, had made a rush movement within two days of the meeting to get stock, but they had not secured enough to baulk the Selkirk project. In the hot duel, that was to last a decade between these men and the interests they represented, Selkirk had drawn first blood. He then laid before the meeting his cherished plan, a plan that was to have enormous consequences for the Empire and the world; for the Selkirk Colony, planted on the Red River as the outcome of that meeting, brought about the following distinct results: It held the great West-land for the British Crown by being a bulwark against the aggression of the nation to the south, which was not then in a very friendly mood, and which gained ground elsewhere because there was no real body of British opinion to protest against the extraordinary elasticity of the boundary line.

Besides that, the Selkirk Colony, once it got a footing on the Red River, attracted the attention of the world to the fact that a region once considered fit only for hunters and traders and fur-bearing animals, was in reality the basis of a granary for the Empire. In consequence of this the tide of immigration later on discovered a channel in a westward direction. Then Eastern Canada, confederated in 1867, bought out the charter of the controlling fur company, and a great Canadian railway was projected to knit together the new Dominion with the province founded by the Selkirk Colony at the very centre of the line. More than that, and better than that, the Selkirk settlers, being strongly devoted to religion and education, stamped the new land with the indelible seal of character, and by the founding of school and church and college became a remarkable influence for good upon their own and succeeding generations.

The proposal made by Lord Selkirk, which led to these results, was placed before the meeting in London, to which reference was made above. Briefly, he offered to purchase a tract of land larger than the old Province of Manitoba, to plant thereon a colony as a nucleus for larger settlement, and to assume all expenses in regard to transport, government, treaties with the Indians, and such like. It was a large order, a tremendous undertaking, an enterprise that put burdens, eventually crushing, upon the

shoulders of the founder, but which marked him as one of the few men who have, at all costs to themselves, led movements for the good of their fellows.

Once the Earl had settled these arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company, as above outlined, he set about the task of securing his colonists, mainly from the north of Scotland, and procuring means of transporting them to their new home. Here, again, Alexander Mackenzie and the agents of the North-West Fur Company withstood the plans of the colonizer, and did all they could to dissuade the people from going on what they described as a hazardous journey to a frozen land; but, after many difficulties, the first band of settlers got away on rather shaky sailing vessels for the long voyage to Hudson Bay. They arrived in the fall of 1811, and, in such huts as could be erected at York Factory, they wintered in the intense and unaccustomed cold. In the spring they continued the journey of seven hundred miles more to the Red River, by river and lake and trail, amidst hardships which tried the hardiest voyageurs, much more these Scottish crofters and fishermen, to whom it was all so new; but they went on, with the indomitable perseverance which ultimately planted an unshakable colony in the midst of a new continent. They reached their destination, where the city of Winnipeg now stands, in August, 1812. The

date marks the beginning of a new era in this country. It was a landing of Pilgrim Fathers in Western Canada.

The importance of the event can hardly be over-estimated. The exodus of these obscure, but highly desirable settlers, intelligent, industrious and honest, from the Old Land and their entry into the new, had a wide-reaching social significance. At the point of departure it was a living protest against the iniquity of the private monopoly of vast estates in land, where such land was either let out to tenants on more or less impossible terms, or else was allowed to lie non-productive to please the caprice or sport-loving proclivities of the owner; and at the point of arrival a wedge was being driven that would ultimately sever the connection between a monopolistic fur-trading company and the huge territory they held by Royal Letters Patent. And the strange thing was that all this was being done by a man who had the controlling interest in that company's stock, and who owned an immense area of land which he intended to give in fee simple to his colonists as they required it. The explanation of this apparent anomaly lies in the fact that Lord Selkirk felt from the first that Rupert's Land, as the great territory of the Hudson's Bay Company was called, would eventually be the home of millions of prosperous people, and that it must hence pass, sooner or later, out of the

control of the Company into the hands of settlers. If he was a dreamer of dreams, as we have said, he was also a seer of visions, and a vision of a happy, contented population, supported by the soil, was clearly before his eyes from the beginning; and his vision has become a constantly-growing reality. So far as his granting lands to the colonists is concerned, that is but another evidence of his sincere desire to help the poor and unfortunate amongst his evicted fellow-countrymen.

It is not necessary that we should go into minute details as to the fortunes of the several early bands of colonists sent out by Lord Selkirk. They continued to come at various dates until 1815. When the first group of colonists came in 1812 they found the season wearing on towards autumn, and they were worn out with their two-months' journey from York Factory. They were without means, and for food and shelter had to rely partly on the agents of their benefactor. They had to camp in the open and engage in fishing for their food. As the winter drew on they went some sixty miles farther up the Red River to Pembina, where they were able to secure buffalo meat. Up to this point the North-West Fur Company, which had built a fort, with the defiant name of "Gibraltar," near where the settlers were to locate permanently, did not show any hostility. In May the settlers, who had been joined by another party,

returned to their first location; but they had nothing with which to cultivate the rich soil. Fish were scarce and, after subsisting all summer on such wild roots and plants as were eatable, they had to go back to the buffalo grounds for the winter. This time the North-West Fur Company people were less friendly, and the winter months were anxiously spent. Once more, in the spring, these wandering colonists came back and tried to grow some crops. A third party of colonists had now arrived, and the North-West Fur Company began to show its teeth. The year before, Governor Miles Macdonnell, who had been placed by the Hudson's Bay Company in charge on the Red River, in order to conserve food for the settlers, had issued a proclamation putting an embargo on the export of any kind of provisions. This was resented by the North-Westerns, the half-breed traders and the Indians as a restraint on their freedom. They made up their minds to root out the colony, which was evidently under the wing of their rivals. Accordingly, we find the whole matter discussed at the annual meeting of the North-Westerns at Grande Portage in July, 1814, where it was decided to take steps in that direction. They began to feel that a colony would not be helpful to their fur-trade. So they sent Alexander Macdonnell and Duncan Cameron to see that the Hudson's Bay Company was held in check and their settlers



scattered to the four winds of heaven. These men were well fitted for their task, and that they were not going to be too nice about the means employed is indicated in a letter from Macdonnell to William McGillivray (after whom Fort William was called) in which he said: "Nothing but the complete downfall of the colony, by fair means or foul, will satisfy some—a most desirable object if it can be effected. So here is at them with all my heart and energy." Duncan Cameron was an artist in his line. He wore a military uniform, spoke Gaelic, practised lavish hospitality, misrepresented the Hudson's Bay Company, promised free lands elsewhere, and induced more than half of the colonists to go east and settle in Upper Canada. The settlers who did not go east were left to the tender mercies of Alexander Macdonnell; and he, gathering a band of mounted half-breed plainsmen, under their prairie leader, Cuthbert Grant, gave the remaining settlers notice to quit at once or be exterminated. There was nothing for these unarmed colonists to do but retire to Lake Winnipeg, after seeing the little cabins they had begun to build burned to the ground by the emissaries of the North-Westerns. Nothing remained but the little Hudson's Bay Company post called "Fidler's Fort" after its builder. In this little fort the Hudson's Bay trader, John McLeod, with all his Highland blood aflame, cut up a

logging chain into shrapnel splinters, rammed them into a cannon he had, and gave battle. The mounted men could not face McLeod's wicked little battery, and so they soon betook themselves back to their hunting-grounds. Upon which McLeod hastened to build a new post, called Fort Douglas, named after the noble founder of the colony. This was the grim Highlander's way of saying that Lord Selkirk had still to be heard from before the matter was closed. That McLeod was right speedily appeared, for Colin Robertson, coming from the East with a score of Canadians in the service of the Earl, found the remnant of the settlers at Lake Winnipeg and brought them back to the Red River, where they started to put up some dwellings under the general protection of John McLeod's chain-shot artillery. And Lord Selkirk, undiscouraged, determined to bring one more strong band of colonists from Scotland to hold the ground. It was not for nothing that he had been brought up in the country where people believe in "a stout heart to a stey brae," and the next time there was trouble on the Red River the valiant scion of Douglas and Angus would be on hand himself, as the sequel will record.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *THE CLIMAX OF STRIFE.*

THE Selkirk Colony, as we have seen, had been put under the ban by the North-West Fur Company, which invoked the support of the French half-breed hunters under the leadership of the turbulent Cuthbert Grant, who was of Scottish extraction on the father's side. The Company regarded colonization as a distinct enemy to their trading business, and as the organization that had first pushed its way into the prairie country, they professed right of occupation by precedence. They conveniently overlooked the somewhat important fact that in point of law they were intruding on the territory which the Hudson's Bay Company held by royal charter; and these North-Westerners wrought skilfully upon the credulity of the plainsmen by telling them that colonization would drive away the buffalo and destroy all their old methods of living. Hence the old Roman cry as to Carthage was revived under the modern form, "The Colony must be destroyed."

In 1815, as we have seen, two-thirds of the settlers were enticed by the North-Westerners to go to Eastern Canada, and the other third were

expelled by Cuthbert Grant and his rough-riders, who, to make sure that there would be no return, burned the houses these poor colonists had just erected. We have seen, however, that these expelled colonists returned under Lord Selkirk's man, Colin Robertson, when McLeod at Fidler's Fort had stood to his gun. This time the settlers did not rebuild, but, erecting huts and tents, they devoted their time to efforts at getting the land into shape for cultivation; and the North-Westerns and their semi-savage men out in the Qu'Appelle country were taking note and making ready for a final coup which they intended should wind up the colony and the colonists for all time.

Meanwhile, over in Scotland, Lord Selkirk, whose courage was unbroken, and whose interest in the colony was unabated, was arranging in 1815 to send out from Kildonan the largest and ablest band of colonists he had yet gathered together; and in order to ensure some stable form of oversight in the Red River country, he had a new Governor, a military man, Robert Semple, sent out to take charge. It was with this band that my father came out as a lad; but, young though he was, the scenes through which they passed on arrival at the Red River were never effaced from the tablets of his memory. These new settlers had expected to find their relatives and friends in free and happy homes in the colony on a new continent. With these

friends they might well hope to find shelter, renewing old memories, until they, too, could have homes of their own in the free land of the West, but instead of all that they found only a few huts and tents amid the ashes of the homes that had been built, and, without houses or food, and with very inadequate clothing, these people were facing the icy breath of an approaching winter in an environment to which they were wholly unaccustomed. But, with an indomitable courage born of invincible faith, these way-worn colonists went on to Pembina and built huts, and finally had to eke out a living by doing such work as they could for the plainsmen. In the early spring they returned hopefully to the scene of their future settlement on the Red River, and began to cultivate the soil with such primitive implements as they possessed. But around the heads of these innocent and unsuspecting settlers a new storm of hate and persecution was gathering, for, away out in the Qu'Appelle country, Cuthbert Grant, practically engaged by the North-West Fur Company for the purpose, was assembling his plain-hunters and frontiersmen in order to swoop down on the little group of honest peasants who were trying to begin the foundation industry of agriculture on the eastern edge of the prairie.

From the first, as already indicated, the North-West Fur Company had resented the

invasion of the interior of the country by the Hudson's Bay Company, albeit the latter had charter rights to the whole country; and the North-Westerners especially resented the coming of the colonists, because the colonist and the wild game hunter or trader cannot dwell permanently together in the same land. So the fiat had gone forth that these intruders, who were beginning to farm, should be extirpated, root and branch, and who could carry out this fiat better than the so-called "Warden of the Plains," Cuthbert Grant? Hence, on the 19th of June, 1816, this redoubtable leader and his mounted semi-savages were seen from Fort Douglas to be making their way across the prairie to where the settlers were at work. Whereupon Governor Semple, with a score or so of the men of that Hudson's Bay fort, went out on foot to meet the attacking party and discover their intentions. Semple's hardihood has been denounced by some who called his conduct by that name, but he saw the settlers menaced, and felt bound to protect them as far as possible. That the dismantling of their Fort Gibraltar by Semple had rankled in the breasts of the North-Westerners was evident by their crying out to the Governor, "We want our fort!" There was some parley, but when a shot was fired by one of Grant's party the fusilade opened, and Governor Semple and some score of his men were wounded or killed outright.

Semple's wound was, he said himself, not serious, and he asked the enemy to take him to Fort Douglas; but an Indian who was with Grant came up and shot him dead as he lay on the ground. The Grant command then went on to Frog Plain, where the Selkirk colonists had their holdings. One of my uncles narrowly escaped death at the hands of Grant's men for making some protest, and to John Pritchard, who had escaped the Semple massacre, Grant said that he had intended to hunt the settlers like buffaloes. He added that if Fort Douglas was not given up without resistance, every man, woman and child would be put to death. However, there was no one to defend the fort, and Grant and his band took possession, while the unfortunate settlers, who were only a few months in the country, were allowed to depart down the Red River in a few boats, which carried all that was left to them. But these much mal-treated colonists—the Honor Roll of the Selkirk Settlement—refused to abandon the country and defeat the efforts of their noble benefactor. Accordingly, they went only a few miles to Lake Winnipeg, and there encamped to await developments. Meanwhile, the North-Westerners held Fort Douglas for several months, and held high revel after their manner.

But the Douglas was not the man to allow his colony to be permanently scattered. Knowing that the North-West Company was busy in

the process of exterminating it, Selkirk came to Montreal in 1816, and then, having gathered a number of Swiss mercenaries under Colonel De Meuron, he started westward with the full purpose of helping his settlers to hold the ground. When he reached the head of Lake Superior, he got word of the massacre of Semple and his men at Seven Oaks, and, turning aside, he took Fort William as an act of reprisal, though this act and the arrest of some of the North-Westerners led the Earl into harassing litigation in the succeeding months; and the courts in Canada, as we have said, seemed to rather delight in getting a chance to make things uncomfortable for the Colonizer. However, having taken Fort William, Selkirk pushed on to the Red River, where, without any bloodshed, he recaptured Fort Douglas and restored his persecuted colonists to their holdings. This visit of Lord Selkirk to the Red River in 1817 was, in many respects, the most outstanding event in the early history of the Selkirk Colony in the minds of the settlers themselves. In my boyhood days I often heard the old men, who had seen and conversed with the Earl, and had heard his addresses, talk the matter over and seek to impress upon us younger folk the greatness of their benefactor and friend. They spoke of his tall, slight, aristocratic figure, his gentleness of speech, his beauty of manner; of the way in which he



expressed appreciation of their endurance, of the pains he took to assure them that they had a right to their Red River home, and that they would never again be disturbed in their possession of it. He assembled the settlers and told them that the Red River community would be known as Kildonan, after the strath they had left in sorrow in Scotland, and he made special grants of land for church and school purposes. Their after history showed that the colonists appreciated the Earl's provision for religious services and for education. He also secured for the settlers title to the river lots on which they settled, on either side of the river, north of where Winnipeg now stands. This plan of settlement on narrow lots fronting on the river bank and running back on the prairie several miles is not conducive to farming on a big scale, as the acreage is necessarily limited, and too much time is lost travelling backwards and forwards to work from one end of this long farm to the other. But it enabled the colonists to live close together as in one long village street by the river bank, and it had, on that account, many strong points in its favor. It was good for mutual helpfulness and defence in the frontier days. There were no isolated settlers, and so all could be mobilized quickly in case of need. In a new country the isolated settler is a sort of temptation to marauders, and hence he often involves the country in trouble

on his account. Besides that, the settlement by the river gave the colonists an unfailing supply of water for themselves as well as their stock, and afforded sustenance in fish. But more than all, the Selkirk manner of land settlement was good for social life, and opened the way for the work of church and school, and upon these advantages those early colonists placed great stress. The peril of the rectangular survey in the land system of a new country menaces specially the women and the children. It deprives the women of social life and subjects them to the mental strain of solitude to a dangerous degree, and it practically makes school advantages for the children impossible until settlement becomes dense. All these dangers, which, as we shall see, became factors in the later life of the West, were wisely avoided in the Selkirk Colony; and, in consequence of this wisdom as to the system of land tenure, the high level of the social, religious and educational life of the Kildonan settlement on the Red River was a constant and delightful surprise to the early explorers and travellers who came upon this oasis of education and refinement in the midst of a vast semi-civilized wilderness.

To secure the extinction of the Indian title to these lands, as well as to secure the permanent goodwill of the aborigines, the "Silver Chief," as Lord Selkirk was called by the Indians, in allusion to his distinguished

appearance as well as his generosity, made treaties with the Indians, who were the native owners of these vast plains. The settlers were to receive lots of a certain width on the river, extending back as far as a white horse could be seen on the prairie on a clear day. This meant a farm about two miles long and from five to ten chains wide, so that I remember how the early immigrants from Ontario used to rather poke fun at our people for farming on "lanes." But the "lane" farm had its advantages, as already described. In connection with the treaty negotiations of Lord Selkirk, it is worth noting again that the Salteaux, Assiniboine and Chippewa Indians, whose chiefs entered into treaty engagements, kept their obligations sacredly through the generations from father to son. In that respect these children of the wild show a good, but not always an imitated, example to the civilized world.

This famous visit of Lord Selkirk to his Red River Colony in 1817 was his last and only call upon his settlers in their new home. He returned to Scotland by way of Montreal, where everything in the world in the shape of a possible lawsuit was brought against him through the agency of the North-West Fur Company. Some were too absurd to make much headway, even in courts which were by no means favorable to the philanthropic Colonizer; and hence it is no wonder that the gallant

Earl, never very robust, and worn out by many journeys and countless anxieties, went back to Scotland, weakened in health, but with a strong desire to get the whole case of his settlers before the British public through the Houses of Parliament. It was in this connection that his sister wrote to the Earl's college friend, Sir Walter Scott, asking the help of that famous master of the pen in presenting Lord Selkirk's case in the open. But the chivalrous writer, who had enriched the literature of all time by his descriptive, imaginative power, had been so crushed by the burdens that fell upon him through the failure of a great publishing house that his sun was going down in the early afternoon of life. The generous soul of the genius of Abbotsford could not any longer compel the waning body to a large task, but the line he wrote in reply is a noble tribute to the Earl, for Sir Walter said: "I never knew in my life a man of a more generous and disinterested disposition, or one whose talents and perseverance were better fitted to bring great and national schemes to successful conclusion."

But the leading facts concerning affairs in the Red River became known, and before his death, which took place on April 8th in 1820, the noble benefactor of his persecuted Highland fellow-countrymen knew that his colony would no longer be disturbed by human foes. When the news of Lord Selkirk's death reached

the Red River, men and women there wept over his demise far away under the shadows of the Pyrenees; but they knew that they had many a fight still to wage against circumstances before they would reach even reasonable competency for themselves and their families. They had no desire to be rich; they were free from the debasing passion for sudden wealth which has cursed many a frontier; but they were anxious to build homes and a church and school in the parish which their noble friend had granted and named. There were struggles ahead, as they well knew, but for these they braced themselves that they might still justify the hopes and ambitions of the Earl and show to the world that his dream would become a great reality in the eyes of men.

In the winter of the year 1817, the year of the Earl's visit the settlers went to Pembina for the winter and maintained themselves by hunting, until, in the spring of 1818, they returned to their land and sowed what they could. There was good prospect of a crop, but in July the sun was darkened by clouds of grasshoppers, which fell upon the fields and gardens and devoured everything in sight. So it had to be "back to Pembina" for the winter and the hunting again. In 1819 the colonists returned and sowed the fields, but the young grasshoppers began to appear in swarms, eating every living thing that grew out of the ground. Later on in

the years I saw grasshoppers twice on the Red River, moving like organized armies, and leaving behind them such a desolation as existed after the ravages in the valley of the Shenandoah in the Civil War, when it was said "that if a crow intended to fly down the valley he would have to carry his rations." I have seen a cohort of grasshoppers go through even a thicket of Canadian thistle and leave nothing but the white bare willows standing like pipe-stems where the thicket had been. No wonder the colonists saw that they must give up and go back to Pembina for another winter; and so they struggled backwards and forwards until 1822, when, ten years after the first band of settlers had come, they grew enough to provide the bare necessities of life. For the next three years they continued to make such headway as their primitive agricultural implements would allow. Then, in 1825, there came a year of unusual severity, when deep snow added its quota to the intense cold. The plainsmen, who depended on the buffalo for supply of food, were the chief sufferers, for the storms drove the buffalo beyond reach and killed the horses of the hunters. The Selkirk settlers, with their usual open-heartedness, did all they could to relieve their nomadic brethren on the plains; but in the spring they themselves suffered the severest loss in their remarkably trying history. The sudden thaw of the deep snow, along with

an ice blockade, caused the Red River to overflow its low banks and become a raging torrent of great extent on both sides. The settlers barely escaped with their lives and some of their stock to the high ground miles back from the river, but their houses and stables and barns were swept away like straws in total wreckage into Lake Winnipeg. Yet, when in a month the flood went down, these undaunted men came back and began all over again. Since that time we have had floods and grasshoppers and rebellions, but the colony was never uprooted. It remained to stamp its character on the West. But we feel that even the most sympathetic imagination will fall short of understanding what those colonists endured. We do know that those who passed through the experience found no language adequate to the task of describing it. My father, who entered the colony in 1815, and never abandoned it or ceased being active in its life till that day when, at the age of ninety years, he passed away, was often visited in his closing days by tourists from the British Isles, who desired some account of the early times. I recall his attempts to depict the scenes, concerning which he could say, with the hero of Virgil, "*Quorum magna pars fui.*" I can see him yet, a powerfully-built figure, in the old wooden armchair which is now one of my prized possessions. He would bring down his

strong hand on the arm of the chair, as he told his story with Highland passion. I can hear the story flow on till he felt the inadequacy of language as recollections rushed upon him, and then he would stop short, saying, "It's no use talking, gentlemen, I can't tell you half of it; but I will say one thing, and that is that no people in the world but the Scotch could have done it," and the last party of Englishmen that came to the old farmhouse, seeing his earnestness, applauded him with unselfish enthusiasm. Whether my father was unduly partial to his own race or not may be a matter of opinion; but there can be no two opinions as to the difficulties these colonists triumphantly battled with, and if you seek their monument, look around you on the religious and educational, as well as the material, greatness of the North-West.



## CHAPTER V.

### *THE WESTERN 'ARCADIA.*

WE have seen the Selkirk colonists passing through their desperate struggle and coming to stable and growingly prosperous settlement. They were still to have their ups and downs, as, for instance, in 1852, when another disastrous flooding of the Red River drove them once again from the devastated farms back to the hill elevations on either side of the swollen stream; and they never became independent of the splendid necessity for continuous toil; but neither were they ever again reduced to the starvation conditions which they had experienced during their first ten years in the new land. Few who were not in actual contact with them can ever understand the sternness of the battle they fought in laying the foundations of Western civilization; but every one who does understand is willing to come to the salute when the name of this old colony is mentioned. Few men knew more of the real history of these pathfinders than the late Lord Strathcona, and, in a preface to a few short articles I wrote some years ago on the subject, his Lordship said: "Many of the original Selkirk

settlers and their descendants have been personally and intimately known to me, including one of the most respected of the pioneers, the father of Mr. MacBeth; and I have always respected and admired their sterling qualities of head and heart. I know how they worked and how they lived, and in my judgment the West owes more to their efforts and their example than is generally admitted or can well be conceived by the present generation of Canadians. One illustration of their simple character and honesty occurs to me at the time of writing. Nothing more was required of them in connection with the transfer of land, than a personal appearance before the Registrar and an oral intimation of the transaction to be effected. No deeds or documents were completed in such cases, and no conveyance of the kind was ever questioned." In fact, all business transactions were considered as matters of honor, and such things as promissory notes or such like would have been looked on as not only unnecessary but practically as an insult to a man's reliability.

At the time of the flood of 1826, referred to already, the population of the Red River Valley would be about fifteen hundred or so, composed of the Hudson's Bay officials, the Selkirk settlers along the Red River, and the French half-breeds (generally called "the French"), who were somewhat nomadic, but who began to

settle in homes along the Red River south of the junction with the Assiniboine. In 1821, the two great fur-trading rivals, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Fur Company united their forces under the name of the former, and a young Scotsman, George Simpson (knighted in 1839), was appointed Governor, to get the merger into a going concern, and later on to effect some sort of governmental organization according to the needs of the country. With the possible exception of Semple, whose name always came up in connection with the Seven Oaks massacre, no Governor of the early times was so much spoken of in my boyhood days as Sir George Simpson. If it was true that he had to overcome and "break his birth's invidious bar," it is quite certain also that he "made, by force, his merit known." For nearly four decades he controlled largely, and, in some degree, autocratically, the destinies of the great Company, and he impressed a remarkably strong personality upon the history of the country. He was physically well endowed, was capable of an endless amount of work, had immense energy, possessed an affable, even jovial, disposition, and exercised his office with a strange mixture of benevolence and despotism, which suited the period and the land in which he lived. He had much fondness for the spectacular, and in his constant travelling over his wide domain,

dressed elaborately, had decorated canoes, gaily caparisoned horses, was accompanied by the skirl of the bagpipes, and entered the important trading-posts with great ceremony and *éclat*. Bonfires blazed and guns saluted when the Governor came. No doubt he had some personal fondness for this sort of thing, but there was much method in his madness. He had to deal with a primitive people, especially with thousands of Indians of many tribes across the continent, and these impressionable people are particularly susceptible to the influence of pomp and circumstance; and, in any case, there is such a thing as being too democratic. There is some value in the Windsor uniform, the gown of the judge, the uniform of the policeman, and the presence of the mace, as elements in the preservation of law and order; and, out here on Western frontiers, it has been long understood that criminality is far more rampant in countries where elected judges sit coatless to try cases than where the administrator of law, in robe and ermine, conducts, with dignity, a British court. When we look back upon Sir George Simpson from our date, we may think his moods were peculiar and his customs almost ridiculous, but to his contemporaries they approved themselves as being tremendously effective, aided, as they were, by his great ability and powers of diplomacy. Perhaps nothing is more suggestive of Simpson's

thoroughness and stupendous energy than the fact that, in 1822, just following his appointment, he made the overland trip from the Hudson Bay clear across the continent to the Pacific, by lake, river and trail, in the almost incredible space of ninety days. Out of these he spent sixteen at the important posts, in each of which he held a sort of court after his imposing entry. Later on, in order to enlarge his store of knowledge of men and trade, he made his famous trip around the world at a time when few attempted such an undertaking.

It was to this man, then, that the task of arranging some form of government for the country was assigned. Up to this time there was no government except such as local communities arranged among themselves. The buffalo-hunters, for instance, had their own code. Each camp was in the hands of a headman, who had a primitive cabinet to assist him in the preservation and protection of life and property. My older brothers went periodically with the buffalo-hunters, and they claimed that amongst the camps and cavalcades there was a wonderfully well-worked out series of regulations. We find such "laws" as these: "No buffalo to be run on the Sabbath day." They were strict on this point as a matter of conscience, but they also discovered in those early days what has been proven in munition factories in war-time, namely, that a day of rest

is an absolute necessity if physical, mental and moral collapse is to be prevented. "No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before without permission." "No person or party to run buffalo before the general order." There was no privileged class amongst these people. Everyone had an even chance. For breaches of these and other such laws there were stern enough penalties. For a first offence, the person guilty was to have his saddle and bridle cut up, and this was a calamity. For the second his coat was to be cut up, and for the third he was to be flogged. Where everything was left open around the camps it was necessary to have definite ideas about ownership, and the law against theft was tremendously effective. Any person convicted of theft, after fair trial, even though the theft might only be of a piece of buffalo sinew used in sewing moccasins or harness, was brought to the centre of the camp, in full view and hearing of all, and the "court crier" called out his or her name three times, adding the word "Thief," with a shout on each occasion. However, honesty was practically universal amongst the people, and this dire punishment was hardly ever called for, unless some outside camp follower, with loose conception as to property ownership, had transgressed. Then, again, amongst the settlers who had to cut hay for their stock on the plains, which were common to all, there was a date

before which no one could begin on pain of general displeasure; and when a settler had selected his hay-ground and had, with his scythe, cut a swath around it, that cutting was as real a protection as a stone wall, for it was a matter of honor that no one should cross into another's "circle." In this way the early communities governed themselves; but as population grew and became more heterogeneous, something more settled was required. Accordingly, as we have stated, Sir George Simpson essayed the task.

The outcome of his effort was a number of local regulations administered by himself, several magistrates, and a few irregular constables, all of whom followed regular occupations, subject to call at any time for duty. This general condition of things continued up to 1835, when the Hudson's Bay Company, having repurchased from Lord Selkirk's heirs, for about £85,000 sterling, the land sold to the Earl for the Red River Colony, seemed to realize added responsibility for law and order in the country; and so Sir George Simpson took farther steps to organize government, to establish courts of justice, and enact such local legislation as might be necessary, in addition to British law, which had, of course, full jurisdiction all through the North-West. Accordingly we find Sir George securing, through the Hudson's Bay Executive in London, the appointment of a "Council of

'Assiniboia," consisting of himself as president and fifteen influential members of the Red River Colony as councillors.

As this was the first governing, or rather legislating, body in the West, the names should be of interest. They are as follows: Sir George Simpson, president; Alexander Christie, the Right Reverend the Roman Catholic Bishop; the Rev. D. T. Jones (Church of England) and his assistant, Rev. William Cochrane (these being the only two Churches then with clergy in the West); James Bird, James Sutherland, W. H. Cook, John Pritchard, Robert Logan, Alexander Ross, John McCullum (Coroner), John Burns (Medical Adviser), Andrew McDermott, Cuthbert Grant. Perhaps the best known amongst the laymen were John Pritchard, who escaped the Seven Oaks massacre, wrote an account of it, became secretary to Lord Selkirk, and established the first residential school in the Red River country. Alexander Ross was then sheriff in the colony, but had been in the fur trade in what is now British Columbia, where he had married the daughter of an Okanagan chief. On coming to Fort Garry he was given a grant of land, now worth ten millions, in the City of Winnipeg. He wrote an excellent history of the colony and was highly respected by all parties. James Bird was a retired Hudson's Bay man, whose son was afterwards Speaker of the



Manitoba Legislature. Andrew McDermott, the pioneer independent merchant of the Fort Garry district, whose presence on the Council indicated a recognition of the free-trader in some measure. Then there was Cuthbert Grant, the redoubtable leader of the rough-riders in the Seven Oaks massacre, who had settled down to peaceful avocations. Of course, this Council was nominated by the Hudson's Bay Company in terms of their charter powers, and being so, was not as representative of the people as an elective body would have been; but they did wonderfully good service in the primitive days. At the opening meeting, which was held on February 12th, 1835, a notable date, Sir George Simpson, in the course of his "Speech from the Throne," said: "The population of this colony is become so great, amounting to about five thousand souls, that the personal influence of the Governor, and the little more than nominal support afforded by the constables, which, together with the good feeling of the people, have hitherto been its principal safeguard, are no longer able to maintain the tranquility and good government of the settlement; so that, although rights of property have of late been frequently invaded, and other serious offences been committed, I am concerned to say, we are under the necessity of allowing them to pass unnoticed, because we have not the means at command of enforcing

obedience and true respect, according to the existing order of things. Under such circumstances, it must be evident to one and all of you that it is quite impossible society should hold together; that the time has at length arrived when it becomes necessary to put the administration of justice on a more firm and regular footing than heretofore, and that immediate steps ought to be taken to guard against dangers from abroad or difficulties at home, for the maintenance of good order and tranquility, and for the security and protection of lives and property."

The allusion to troubles in the community arose out of efforts, more or less lawless according to the individuals engaged, in the direction of free-trading throughout the country; and the reference to dangers abroad came from proximity to the boundary line, which for various reasons at that time was causing some uneasiness.

At that opening session some very useful legislation was passed—organizing a volunteer force; dividing the country into judicial districts, with a justice of the peace in charge of each; establishing certain rules for legal procedure; making provision for a court-house and jail, and arranging for some export and import duties to meet expenses of administration.

At the conclusion of this first session Sir

George Simpson, who was a considerable diplomat as well as a far-seeing statesman, announced that the Hudson's Bay Company would give three hundred pounds sterling to aid in road-building and other public works in the colony. This seemed a large sum in those days, and the Council passed a resolution of very grateful appreciation. We can be assured, from what we know of the men of that time, that none of the money was wrongfully used.

At a later day my father was a member of the Council of Assiniboia and a justice of the peace, and I can recall from earliest childhood some scenes connected with his administration of justice which were generally characteristic of the practice by other magistrates. There was more regard paid to the precepts and example of Solomon than to the technicalities of law, of which in the ordinary sense they knew very little. I can remember, for instance, a case in which there was some misunderstanding as to the right to a certain hay meadow, and the result was what in law would be considered an assault in an attempt at ejection. The ejected individual came to my father and gave his story. Then the other party was summoned, and court was held right there and then in our sitting-room. After hearing the evidence my father adjudged that both parties were to blame in equal proportion; each would pay his own costs, and they were to become

reconciled by shaking hands in presence of the magistrate. In order that neither party would be humiliated by having to give way to the other, it was adjudged that from their positions on either side of the room they were to advance, to meet at a point in the centre and there clasp hands in token of the dispute being at end. These arrangements proved wonderfully effective in most cases, and the parties hardly ever returned. Any breach of such arrangement would, I suppose, be treated as contempt of court, which was looked on by most people as a dire offence that brought specific punishment as well as social ostracism. I recall also the case of Maurice Lowman, who was business manager for a well-known merchant, and who had charge of the hiring of men for freighting expeditions. A young half-breed, who had been hired by Lowman, died of fever in St. Cloud, while on a trip there for goods. The young man's father, whose name was Fidler, blamed Lowman, who was hundreds of miles away, for his son's death. So Fidler, imbibing freely of rum, armed himself with a hayfork and went to the store to wreak vengeance. Lowman, who was a lame and somewhat delicate man, did not like being hunted by a drunken man with murderous intent and a fork, so he went out the back way, mounted a horse, and came down to my father's house to lay an information. While he was there Fidler

arrived with his weapon, and as it was a time of storm they were kept over-night, each one being ignorant of the other's whereabouts; but in the morning my father, who had gathered some evidence in the meantime, summoned court in the house, and after showing Fidler, who was now sober, the unreasonableness of charging Lowman with the death of a man who, hundreds of miles away, had taken ill and died despite good treatment, pointed out to him the seriousness of his offence in threatening Lowman and going after him with a murderous weapon. The upshot was that Fidler was "bound over to keep the peace," and both parties in the end recognized that they had gotten well out of the whole situation.

Of course the administration of law was not left in the hands of these untrained though fair-minded men, because in 1839 Judge Adam Thom was installed as the head of the country's judiciary. Being the appointee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who also paid his salary, it was only natural that the settlers and traders would have some doubts as to his impartiality. It was jocularly said years ago that a certain railway magnate in another country used to take around his own judge to try cases in which his interests were involved; and Judge Thom's position at the outset would be somewhat open to this criticism. He had, as a journalist, violently assailed Papineau in

Quebec, and this did not add to his acceptability with the French on the Red River. There is no evidence that Judge Thom was partial, but several cases came up soon after his arrival where it would have been impossible, under the circumstances, to convince all parties that he was holding the scales evenly; and after the notable case of Sayre, who was convicted of trading furs, but who was allowed to go on account of a demonstration of force by his friends, Judge Thom vacated the bench and became the clerk of the court, taking an office in which he did good service to the country.

It was inevitable, however, that with a growing and very heterogeneous population there should be difficulties in connection with any system of government in which the consent and active co-operation of the governed were not vital factors. Alexander Ross, though he was a member of the Council of Assiniboia and the sheriff of the colony, is on record as saying that "to guard against foolish and oppressive acts the sooner the people have a share in their own affairs the better. It is only fair that those who have to obey the laws should have a voice in making them." The objection was not generally to the *personnel* of the Council, but to the manner of appointing its members, who, it was generally admitted, had the welfare of the country at heart. Men like Mr. Alexander K. Isbister, a native son of the Red River country,

who had gone to England and had made a place for himself as an educationalist, espoused the case of the people and led the way to their having eventually a degree of self-government. Later on they would enter into full-fledged Canadian citizenship; but there were many rivers to cross before they would arrive at that point, and so in the next chapter we shall look at some of the characteristics of life in what may well be termed our Western Arcadia.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *RED RIVER FOLK.*

MANY years ago, on the same trip during which we passed on the North Saskatchewan the famous Fort Cumberland, which was the answer of the Hudson's Bay Company to the aggressive North-Westerns, who were trying to intercept the trade to the Bay, I saw The Pas, farther down towards Lake Winnipeg. It was principally the abode of Indians and unmannerly wolf-dogs, valuable for winter-sleds, but a perambulating terror in the hot summer as they prowled around for their own living. When you met one of them on the path through the marsh, he would not attack you, but his style of approach indicated that he expected the right of way, which was generally conceded without debate. And that day at The Pas, which is now a divisional point on the railway to Hudson Bay, I remembered that it was to this neighborhood certain scientists and astronomers had travelled all the way from Boston in 1860 to observe an eclipse. They came, but they neither saw nor conquered, for the weather was so dark and rainy that they sat in the marsh all through the fateful period without being able to take any observations.



A long, hard journey of some four thousand miles, occupying three months, amply vouches for their scientific zeal; but it must have been exceedingly disappointing astronomically. It would have been wholly disappointing—a sort of nightmare memory—but for the fact that during their journey they saw with delighted surprise what they called the “extraordinary settlement” of the Red River colonists. It took such hold on their imaginations that they wrote a book on the subject, a delightful little book, long since out of print, but filled with admiration for the hospitality, peacefulness, contentment, intelligence and general culture of this colony, whose isolation would have meant the opposite of all this but for the fact that the people had resources within themselves.

This book, written by the visiting scientists, is not now accessible, except where enterprising public libraries have secured a copy from some connoisseur; and the scenes the visitors beheld have practically all undergone change since their day; but out of my boyhood's early recollections I think I know what they saw and experienced. At either end of the settlement on the Red River, and some twenty miles apart, they would see Upper and Lower Fort Garry, the former being originally built in 1821, and the latter, which still stands, and which was a favorite residence of Sir George Simpson, being erected some ten years later. It is now

a country club for the gentlemen of Winnipeg, a city which was born since the old fort was built. Across from Upper Fort Garry lay the settlement of the French people by the Red River and the Seine, the leading feature there being the old Roman Mission of St. Boniface, with the "turrets twain" which Whittier made immortal in his surpassingly beautiful poem, "The Red River Voyageur." Between the two forts, near the river banks, was the long line of the whitewashed houses of the Selkirk colonists, unpretentious, but neat and cosy in appearance, with their log walls, thatched roofs and wide chimneys of clay. Not far from Upper Fort Garry was the cathedral and schools of the Church of England, whose early enterprise in this new land is beyond praise. Further down the river, at Kildonan, was the Presbyterian church and the school of the Scottish settlers; and it may not be amiss here to remind some present-day critics of the Church, that it was the Church in her different branches that saved the West from putrefaction by keeping religion and education to the fore in those early days.

In the order of their coming into the Red River country with organized religious service, it was natural that as the first colonists were of that persuasion, the Presbyterians should come first. Before leaving Scotland the Selkirk settlers made a proviso that they should

have a minister of their own Church, and if possible one who could speak Gaelic. While waiting for a suitable minister of that type, the Scottish Church sent James Sutherland, an elder, out to the Red River, duly commissioned and authorized to baptize, marry, and hold services. This he did until 1815, when he was practically deported to Eastern Canada in one of the movements by the North-West Fur Company for the extermination of the colony. The death of Lord Selkirk, in 1820, doubtless led to neglect of the promise he had made to his settlers, and so onward until 1851, when the Rev. John Black came, the Kildonan people worshipped with and supported the Church of England, whose clergy generously modified their ritual to meet the somewhat austere view of the Presbyterians. The latter, however, kept up their prayer-meetings and their home instruction during all the years, and never ceased their efforts to get a minister of their own. They sent many petitions home to Scotland, asking that a minister be sent out, but postal facilities via the Hudson Bay were not very good, as may be readily imagined. One petition, carefully prepared and signed, from which good results were hoped, came back as a cover to a crock of butter from York Factory a year after it had been sent away. Butter was being repacked at the Bay for shipment to Fort Garry, and paper being scarce, the fine large

parchment petition caught the eye of some one, who perhaps did not know what it was, but who did know that it would make an excellent covering for the butter-keg. A little disappointment like that could not check these persistent Scots, and finally they won out by sending requests to Scotland and Eastern Canada as well. They were fortunate in getting the Rev. John Black, a man mighty in the Scriptures, a great theologian, an evangelical and passionately eloquent preacher. The year after he came was the year of the second great flood, when the settlers were all away to the hills; and the old people used to speak to the end of their days of the services out on the hillside in '52. A few years after this he was joined by the Rev. James Nisbet, a native of Glasgow, skilled as an architect and builder, as well as theologian. While assisting Mr. Black in the Red River country he planned and built the famous old stone schoolhouse in Kildonan, and then in 1866 became missionary to the Cree Indians on the Saskatchewan, where he began work at a place he named Prince Albert, now a well-known city.

Though a Roman Catholic priest is said to have come West as a chaplain to Verandrye's expedition, the first settled missionaries of that Church came to the Red River in 1818 in the persons of the Reverends J. N. Provencher and Sévère Dumoulin. They began their work

amongst the French and the French-Canadians at St. Boniface, opposite the forks of the Red and Assiniboine. Both were able men. Provencher was the first Bishop in the West, and his name survives in the Dominion constituency in which the descendants of his parishioners live. It was in Bishop Provencher's time that the cathedral, immortalized by Whittier's poem, "The Red River Voyageur," was erected. Though it was burned down, the bells from the "turrets twain" were erected in the second cathedral, and years afterwards were rung, at the suggestion of American Consul Taylor and Lieutenant-Governor Schultz, on Whittier's birthday, a courtesy which brought a beautiful acknowledgment from the aged poet. It is a curious fact that Whittier, who, of course, never saw the Red River, wrote his poem from a description given by a friend who accompanied Rev. John Black to Fort Garry in 1851.

Rev. John West came to the Red River as the Church of England chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1820, but he was also under instruction from the Church Missionary Society to do all he could to promote Christian teaching amongst the Indians; and right nobly did he do his part during his three years of service. He travelled much amongst the Indians, going to Brandon House and Qu'Appelle, and later on to Norway House and York Factory, on the Hudson Bay. He founded a branch of

the Bible Society, with headquarters at Hudson Bay, and got copies of the Scriptures in English, Gaelic, German, Danish, Italian, and French for circulation throughout Rupert's Land. On Mr. West's visit to York Factory in 1822 he held the first anniversary of the Bible Society, and amongst those present and actively interested was Captain (afterward Sir John) Franklin, the famous explorer. Mr. West was succeeded in 1823 by the Rev. D. T. Jones, who, by his sweet reasonableness in doing what he could to meet the views of the Scotch settlers in forms of worship, won the love and respect of all. He built a second and then a third church farther down the Red River, as settlement was extending or as the Indians required shepherding; and in this he was greatly assisted by the devoted Rev. William Cochrane, who came in 1825. His labors, too, were abundant, and he was joined by the Rev. Abraham Cowley and the Rev. John McAllum, the latter of whom founded the famous Boys' School, known afterwards by his name. In 1849 the Rev. David Anderson was consecrated at Canterbury Cathedral as the first Bishop of Rupert's Land, and on his arrival in the Red River established his headquarters at the Upper Church (the others being lower down the river), and called it the Cathedral of St. John.

These three denominations were the pioneers

of organized religious service and of educational work in the West, and the old cemeteries of Kildonan, St. John and St. Boniface are places of great historic interest, because on their grave-stones are found the names of the pioneers of Western Empire. The Wesleyan Church began work in the far North amongst the Indians by the Reverends James Evans, Mason, Rundle, and a few other devoted men, but their work does not enter into this chapter on the Red River, where their first minister was the noted Rev. George Young, who came in 1869, and whose work we shall meet in later chapters. It will thus be seen that the elements that make for the purification of life were by no means neglected in the old colony.

On the commercial side of existence there was nothing startling, but there was something that might be surprising to our day in the fact that no one seemed anxious to make money. The old settlers were satisfied if they could secure homes and have the advantage of church and school for their children. Once they had secured land and reduced it to a state of cultivation, they contented themselves with raising crops and attending to their stock. Between seasons many of the men went on freighting expeditions, with oxen and carts, to the nearest trade depot in the United States, or by boat to the other inlet to the country at York Factory on the Hudson Bay. The summers were filled

with their haymaking and harvesting; but the winters, except for the feeding of stock under cover, afforded more time for education and social life. It was a common custom for young men, who were needed for work in the summer, to go to school in the winter. Literary and debating clubs were in vogue, and it was surprising to many from older places to find evidences of wide reading and much speaking ability, in such an isolated community. There were fewer books, but they were more thoroughly read than the vast libraries of to-day; and there was an absence of self-consciousness, which made the young men effective on the platform. The staginess and the mannerisms of the imitative elocutionist were all absent, but a rugged and forceful eloquence was often developed in the primitive lyceums on the Red River. A few years ago there appeared before the Presbytery of Winnipeg six members of the old Kildonan congregation in the matter of a call to their minister. All these had been educated in the old-fashioned schools, with whatever additional they could learn by further observation and experience. As they presented their views in a simple, manly and straightforward way, there was noticed the great distinction of Scriptural phrases, which always lend such grace and power to spoken thoughts. There was a fine ideal of duty and a vivid sense of an over-ruling Will—and all presented with



a natural eloquence most pleasing to hear. Veterans in the court said afterwards that they had never heard such power and ability in men of their class—truly a fine tribute to their native talent, to their indomitable perseverance, as well as to those who had been their teachers in the churches and schools of the early days.

There were many social customs in the old colony that would seem strange to people of to-day. Marriages were celebrated after publication of banns for two or three consecutive Sundays in church, and so there were no clandestine weddings. They were generally celebrated in winter, and the parties were escorted to and from the place of the ceremony by scores of well-driven fast horses, whose merry sleigh-bells played a continuous wedding march. A good deal of speeding was customary, with one definite limit, namely, that no one was to pass the principal parties on pain of social displeasure. There was much rejoicing at these wedding gatherings, and on the Sunday succeeding the marriage the newly-married couple, with their attendants, were present at church services in a special pew. This practice of "kirking" showed what a prominent place the church had in the life of the people. As a matter of fact, a man who did not go to church with reasonable regularity was shunned in ordinary business as a man not to be trusted.

Funerals were attended by all who received

personal invitations. Services were held, where the solemnity of singing the majestic psalms was a leading feature. All references to the departed were made with Highland reticence. In fact, there was always a somewhat studied effort throughout the life of that day to repress demonstrativeness. A travelling evangelist, for instance, was rebuked by an old elder in the Kildonan Church because the evangelist insisted that religion should be evidenced by standing up or some such open testimony. I recall once, in a neighbor's house, assisting a son to place the body of his father in a coffin, which this same elder, John Sutherland, had made with his own hands and brought to the place of mourning. I recall the matter-of-fact way in which the elder spoke in giving us directions; but the members of that family knew well what a tender heart he was hiding under his brusqueness, and how, ere he left their desolate home, he would lead them in prayer, so that the heavens would seem to open above them with comfort and hope in the midst of their sorrow.

For the funeral services no conveyances were ever used. Every one walked, in respect for the dead and sympathy for the living; and they carried the coffin by turns to the place of burial, also as a mark of respect. I have heard my father relate how, on the death of Donald Ross, a retired Hudson's Bay factor, who was highly regarded, the settlers refused to allow

the question of distance to interfere with their desire to be respectful, and so they carried his body some eighteen miles, from near the Stone Fort to the burial place at St. John's Cathedral. This took a whole day, and at noon they halted where a cart with provisions for a meal met them. Here they had dinner, and again took up the line of march. This may be looked upon as extreme, but as a solemn and affectionate tribute to the memory of the departed, it stands out well in comparison with the confused hurry of people who seem to have no time to perform the last offices with respectful decency.

The views entertained in regard to Sabbath observance were very pronounced, and these prevailed not only amongst the Scotch settlers but on the plains as well, where it will be remembered that no buffalo-running was allowed on Sunday except in cases of dire necessity. This regulation was due to the early discovery of the fact that a day's rest in seven was a highly beneficial and necessary regulation, a discovery sometimes forgotten in our modern asylum-filling craze for perpetual work or dissipation; but, amongst the settlers, the sanctions of the commandment, modified only by the interpretation of the Nazarene, were looked on as binding. I knew of a case where a small party of settlers, leaving their families with scanty food supply, had gone on a winter buffalo hunt, and were camped one Saturday

night along the Pembina mountains. They shared their scanty meal of frozen fish with their faithful sled-dogs, then, before retiring to rest under the lee of their upturned toboggans, with the dogs crouched in the snow, they made their case a matter of prayer. When they awoke three buffaloes were in the valley below; but not till another meeting was held to thank the Provider of all good did an elder take his gun in hand. He approached the buffaloes without difficulty, shot *one*; and though the others circled around within range, he went up and drove them away, holding that he was only justified in taking provision for the day. That kind of faith would seem quixotic to some people, but others hold that it was by reason of such faith that those early settlers triumphed over incredible obstacles.

But the years were passing, and the outside world began to learn by degrees of this Utopian kind of settlement, and, some to investigate the possibilities of the country, and others to hunt big game, began to find their way into the West. It is interesting to know how these newcomers were impressed by the quality of the Red River folk.

Back nearly sixty years ago, the Earl of Southesk, one day in old London, asked a friend if he could suggest some new land in which he could travel in search of health and for real recreation. The friend advised him

to try Rupert's Land, and to apply to the Hudson's Bay Company to make arrangements, by securing men and supplies, for a trip of a year or two through the Great Lone West. So, in due time, the Earl was in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was to go overland by trail to Fort Garry on the expedition contemplated. In a rare book published by him, but now out of print, the Earl gives account of his long trip from St. Paul, through the Fort Garry country into the Saskatchewan, and as far as the Kootenay Valley, in the Rocky Mountains. He writes finely of the Red River men who looked after his welfare on the two-year trip in the open that restored his health. Concerning the man who arranged the tour and engaged those who were to go with the Earl, not only as hired help but as companions who would be intelligent sharers in the life and conversation by the way, Southesk says: "James McKay met me in St. Paul. His appearance greatly interested me, both from his own personal advantages, and because he was the first Red River man that I had yet beheld. A Scotsman, though with Indian blood in his veins on the mother's side, he was born and bred in the Saskatchewan country, but afterwards became resident near Fort Garry, and entered the Company's employ. Whether as guide or hunter, he was universally recognized as one of their best men. Immensely broad-chested and muscular, though

not tall, he weighed eighteen stone; yet in spite of his stoutness he was exceedingly hardy and active, and a wonderful horseman. His face is very handsome—short, aquiline, delicate nose; piercing dark grey eyes; long, dark brown hair, beard and mustaches; white, small, regular teeth; skin tanned to red bronze by exposure to the weather. He was dressed in Red River style—a blue cloth capot (hooded frock-coat) with brass buttons; red and black flannel shirt, which served for waistcoat; black belt around the waist; trousers of brown and white striped home-made woolen stuff; buff leather moccasins on his feet. I had never come across a wearer of moccasins before, and it amused me to see this grand and massive man pacing the hotel corridors with noiseless footfall, while excitable little Yankees in shiny boots creaked and stamped about like so many busy steam engines."

I remember well the man who is so well described by Lord Southesk. His father was a Highland Scot, who had been on the Franklin relief expeditions, and had married a tall, handsome native of the North, who made a devoted, model wife and mother. Their son James, above mentioned by the Earl, was the oldest of several children, all of whom were strikingly handsome. James McKay became the leading intermediary in the negotiations of treaties with the Indians in later years, and was

also President of the Executive Council in Manitoba, as well as Speaker of the Legislature. The last time I saw him was during Lord Dufferin's visit to the West as Governor-General, about 1877. McKay arranged for the visitor a sort of Western hunt and series of races; and as the splendid, massive man drove about with his famous cream horse, the great Irish diplomat no doubt realized the peculiar value of having such a man to stand between the old and the new—a fact to which he made special reference afterwards in public address.

When Lord Southesk reached Fort Garry, under the guidance of James McKay, he met the men who had been selected for the Western trip—all Kildonan men—John McKay, a brother of James; Morrison MacBeth (also written in Highland form, McBeath); and Donald Matheson. After being out on the plains for some days the Earl writes in his diary: "My men go on well. I like them all. John McKay is my head man; a steady, good man, clever with horses, carts, or anything; he manages everything admirably, and suits me exceedingly well. Matheson is a jolly, handsome young Scotchman, singing snatches of bright songs all day. MacBeth, a Scotsman too, grave, tall, gentlemanlike." When the long trip was over the Earl writes his farewell thus: "On Monday I took leave of all my Red River men. It went to my heart to say farewell to

these excellent fellows, so long partakers of my good and evil fortunes, so cheery in prosperity, so gallant in adversity. I shall ever feel under a debt of gratitude to these true and faithful companions." Surely the problem of employer and employed depends for solution on character.

But we are now nearing the era of Confederation, for the provinces in the East were getting together, and great statesmen in those regions were looking westward beyond the old horizon limits to the wide land stretching towards the setting sun. The Red River folk had kept that land British, had demonstrated the immense possibilities of the country, and had stamped upon the immense territory the seal of upright, law-abiding, intelligent character. They were now to witness new developments in the land.



## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE CHANGING ORDER.*

THE vast possibilities and immense resources of the North-West could not remain permanently concealed under the blanket of the Indian or the pelt of the fur-trader; but it should be remembered that the existence of the Indian and the explorations and reports of the fur-trader did a large, if involuntary, service by leading to investigations which resulted in the opening up of the country. We remember, of course, that Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the noted North-West Fur Company leader, quite violently opposed the introduction of the first colonists under Lord Selkirk; and the evidence of Sir George Simpson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, given before the famous "Roebuck Committee" of the British House of Commons in 1857, indicated that he did not consider the country suitable for colonization, and therefore he would discourage it; but the mention of the Roebuck Committee (it was so called, though Labouchere was chairman and Gladstone was an active member) recalls the fact that it was the pressure to secure information about the country which led to the appointment of this committee "to consider the state of those

British possessions in North America which are under the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company, or over which they possess a license to trade." The reference to this license also reminds us that the Arctic districts and the Pacific coast country were not covered by the charter to Prince Rupert and his associates in 1670, as that charter only gave the right to the area drained into Hudson Bay. The rest of the country was covered by license to trade, and this license was renewed from time to time. The House of Commons committee brought the country into the limelight. The Palliser-Hector expedition of exploration, sent out by the British Government, and the Dawson-Hind expedition, sent out by the Government of Canada, added to the store of information and attracted wide attention to the land which has now begun to be the granary of the Empire, the land whose illimitable resources in timber, mines and fisheries now astonish the world. One of the most interesting and ingenious answers to the charge that the Hudson's Bay Company opposed the opening up of the country was written by the late Lord Strathcona in the preface to a few short papers I wrote some years ago on the Selkirk settlers.

"It has been the custom," said his lordship, "to describe the Hudson's Bay Company as an opponent of individual settlement and of colonization. To enter into a controversy upon this

point is not my purpose, but it may be proper to state that the condition of affairs at the time in question, in the country between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, does not appear to have been sufficiently appreciated. Owing to the difficulty of access and egress, colonization in what is now Manitoba and the North-West Territories could not have taken place to any extent. Of necessity, also, the importation of the commodities required in connection with its agricultural development would have been exceptionally expensive; while, on the other hand, the cost of transportation of its possible exports must have been so great as to render competition with countries more favorably situated at the moment difficult, if not impossible. The justice of these contentions will be at once realized when it is remembered that the Red River valley was situated in the centre of the continent, one thousand miles away in any direction from settled districts. . . . Personally, it is my opinion that the acquisition and development of the Hudson Bay Territory was impossible prior to the confederation of the Dominion. No less a body than united Canada could have acquired and administered so large a domain, or have undertaken the construction of railways, without which its development could only have been slow and uncertain. It was not until 1878, eight years after the transfer, that Winnipeg first received

railway communication through the United States. Three or four more years elapsed before the completion of the line to Lake Superior, and it was only late in 1885—sixteen years after the Hudson's Bay Company relinquished their charter—that the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed from ocean to ocean, and Manitoba and the North-West Territories were placed in direct and regular communication with the different parts of the Dominion."

This is well put from the Company's standpoint, and has some highly reasonable arguments in a small compass. To this statement I can add that, so far as my own knowledge and recollection go, the old settlers, colonists and hunters, though becoming conscious of the fact that the Hudson's Bay government was unable to cope with some lawless elements that were developing, made no special effort to change for an uncertain quantity. Apostolic words are authority for saying that the law is made for the lawless and the disobedient; but the peace-loving Western Arcadians felt little need of law-enforcement, as they lived quietly and minded their own business. Why should it be reasonably thought that the people of that time, along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and out on the great plains, would make any special effort to bring in the flood of that larger life which, from the older settled portions of the continent, was beginning to beat

up against their borders? The conditions under which those people lived were, for the most part, the best they knew, and, speaking generally, they were contented and happy under the *regime* of the Hudson's Bay Company, especially as that company did not latterly insist on monopoly in trade. The community, before the transfer to Canada, might be roughly divided into two classes, if we except those who, during the sixties, had come from without into their midst.

The Selkirk settlers and those of their class (who composed the one part) would not, so far at least as the older generation was concerned, be eager for more struggles and wrenchings. For years after coming to the country, as already described, their life had been one of grim and incessant conflict with all manner of difficulties. Not only were they met again and again by the deadly hostility and persecution of the North-West Fur Company, who were determined to destroy the colony brought out under the care of their rivals in trade; not only had locust plagues and epidemics assailed them with ruinous force, but the very elements seemed so unfriendly to people unaccustomed to the climatic conditions, that more than ten long years from their first coming had passed before they had any means of livelihood other than the fish or fowl or products of the chase they might oftentimes, with great hardship and

suffering, secure. Even following those ten years they had scarcely got their homes built and their little plots sowed, when, after the "long and cruel winter" of 1826, the raging Red swept everything they owned before its frothing current into Lake Winnipeg. Is it any wonder that when they got fairly settled, the old men who had come through this magnificent struggle felt that now, when their sinews had been tamed by age and trouble and their heads frosted with the unmelting snows, they were entitled to that decade of rest that rounds out the threescore years and ten?

And so it was that the older of them, while loyal to every British institution that might be set up in their midst, and while anxious to do what was best for their children, waited in the lengthening shadows for the sunset, and neither clamored for changed conditions nor took much active part in them when those conditions began to obtain. The younger people amongst them, it is true—many of whom had gone to eastern institutions of learning, and had come back with some knowledge of life's possibilities under different conditions; and others of whom had, in freighting expeditions, tapped the arteries of business and got the taste of commercial blood—were not averse to the incoming of the new life when circumstances would be ripe for its advent.

The other part of the community was

composed largely of the French and half-breed *bois-brulés*—the adventurous hunters and traders of the time—and these could have no special interest in pressing for the opening of the country to the newer civilization. From their childhood these men had roamed over this great area with a lordly sense of ownership. Without any let or hindrance they had followed the buffalo over the trackless prairie; they had trapped the fur-bearing animals in the forest and on the plains; they had fished in the great lakes and rivers, and in the midst of it all had lived in the enjoyment of a satisfying, if rude, abundance. No one who ever saw one of these plain hunters come in to Fort Garry, after the season's work on the Saskatchewan, could fail to see that he was a person in exceedingly comfortable material circumstances. In his train he had any number of carts (with ponies for each and to spare), and these were laden with the choicest viands in the shape of buffalo meat, marrow-fat, beaver-tail, etc., while he also had a goodly supply of furs that would bring handsome prices. Besides his ponies, he had several choice horses of the larger breed for buffalo runners; and, camping with his family and following in their cosy tents on the prairie, he was as independent as a feudal baron in the brave days of old. Under such circumstances these men were not likely to be active in securing the advent of conditions that would circumscribe

their domain; but neither they nor any other class of the population in the Red River country were predisposed to put obstacles in the way of any incoming system *that would pay due regard to the rights of those who were in the country before its advent.*

It is true, as mentioned above, that some of the younger men of the old settlers' families, who had gone east for higher education, came back with the idea that the Red River country should get into closer touch with Canada; but they were not numerous enough to secure a general movement in that direction. Amongst these young men, for instance, was James Ross, son of the famous old sheriff and historian of the colony, Alexander Ross. James Ross had taken a brilliant course in Toronto, and was afterwards on the staff of *The Globe*, where he had come into contact with the masterful personality of Mr. George Brown, who was one of the first eastern men to have a vision of the coming greatness of the West. Then two Englishmen, Coldwell and Buckingham, came to the Red River in 1859 and started a newspaper called *The Nor'-Wester*, which was edited at times by James Ross and at times by that zealous Canadian, Dr. John Schultz, or his *fidus Achates*, Dr. W. R. Bown. Doctor Schultz was easily one of the most outstanding men in the country in those early days, and, despite failing health in his later years, resultant from



hardships in the first Riel rebellion, he held a prominent place to the end. He was born in Amherstburg, Ontario, took a brilliant course in medicine; but his tremendous virility demanded more than the practice in a quiet eastern town, and so he came to the Red River country in 1865. I remember him when he was in the heyday of his physical strength, a tall giant, beside whose great stride I had to run when, one day in my early boyhood, I went to direct him to a house across the river where he was going on medical consultation. The river was high and rough that day, but the Doctor, with a strength that threatened to snap the heavy oars, propelled the clumsy boat against wind and current. Once when, in the tumultuous transition days, there was the usual riot, the crowd at a meeting made a rush for the platform where Schultz and others were sitting. The doctor rose, and, putting his foot on the bar of the big home-made oaken chair on which he had been sitting, wrenched it asunder as if it had been made of pipe-stems; on seeing which the crowd concluded they would give up the rioting for that evening. Yet this giant had much gentleness about him. He possessed a soft and finely-modulated voice, was a self-controlled speaker of great eloquence, and always retained his gentlemanly and courteous manner in debate. Dr. W. R. Bown was not a man of very special ability, but

could write well and was greatly devoted to Schultz. With men of this type of enthusiastic young Canadianism on its staff from time to time, *The Nor'-Wester* was aggressively on the side of those who desired to oust the Hudson's Bay Company and bring in the tide of new life from the East. However, the postal facilities were very limited, and western pioneers were not only slow to get the newspaper habit, but were disposed to scrutinize the views of newcomers. This attitude, natural enough in a people so long self-contained, was intensified by the fact that certain of these new-comers from the States, and even from Eastern Canada, had not acted so as to commend themselves to the old settlements.

Some of the new arrivals, for instance, who had been hospitably entertained by the settlers with their best, wrote to eastern papers ridiculing the manner of life and the accommodation they found amongst them, and made reference to the dark-skinned people under the somewhat contemptuous name of "breeds." The number, of course, who did any of these things was small, but their conduct offended and estranged many who, ignorant of the fact that such people were only the excrescences on the better life of the older provinces, somewhat guardedly awaited further developments.

In any case there is always a strong element of pathos present when people who have been

in undisputed and absolute possession of a big country realize that limitations are being put upon them by the incoming of new population and new conditions. Even though the narrowing of their domain was for their own ultimate good, we can understand how the white settlers by the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers would feel that a great change was coming over the spirit of their dream. Those who knew what the old order had been realized how completely in many ways it was to be reversed, and hence how carefully and judiciously the Government of Canada, and those who professed to be its agents, should have acted in bringing to pass the changes that would ensue on the West's entering into Confederation. For those settlers, once they had conquered their earlier difficulties, life had been singularly peaceable and uneventful. Its central points outside the home, with all its guileless hospitality and simplicity, were the church and school, both of which bulked far more largely with them than some people in these days of complex society seem able to understand.

They were without the vexation and the heart-burning of active politics, they were ignorant of taxation in any form, while the rivalries that existed were in keeping with their simple life, and had nothing of that fierce element of competition into which the newer civilization was to hurl them. The contests

that had been most in evidence were over such matters as the speed of horses, in regard to which the settlement would often be deeply stirred, especially if the horses were owned in different parts of the colony. There was sometimes a great deal of strength put into efforts to be first with the seeding, harvest, hay-cutting, hay-hauling, or freighting expeditions. It was the ambition of many households always to have breakfast by candle-light, that they might have a good deal done before their more tardy neighbors arose. In the matter of hay-hauling we used to get up in the night, and going out to the yard, where the oxen had been tied to the carts, grope around in the darkness to get them hitched up, now and then pausing to listen whether we could hear the creaking music that betokened the departure of our neighbor's cart-train to the hay swamps. Friendly contests in feats of physical strength were very common. The number of bags of wheat a man could carry on his back, the quantity of shot-bags he could lift over his head, the weight he could hang to his little finger and then write his name on the wall with a coal, the number of loads of hay he could cut with a scythe in a day, or the number of "stooks" of wheat he could handle with a sickle—these were some of the rivalries that gave zest to the simple life of the early days. The school was another field for competition, and on the great days of oral

examination the parents and friends were present as eager and interested spectators of the contest which decided who was the best reader, writer, etc., in the district.

In the business life of the people there was nothing tumultuous. There were no banks and no promissory notes—on the latter of which they would have looked with contempt as on something implying distrust in a man's word of honor. The general stores, either of the Hudson's Bay Company or of individual dealers, were not clamorous for business, as there was no compelling force of competition. Frequently, on going to one of these stores, you had to look up the proprietor, who, leaving the store to take care of itself, was out attending to his horse, or something of that sort. When you went into a store there was no modern clerk to advance with an alluring smile; indeed, the proprietor or clerk might even say that he had not the article asked for, until the customer would wander around and find it for himself. No wrapping-paper was used, and you had either to bring a bag with you, buy some cotton, or leave your tea and sugar on the counter.

Think of a community like that being suddenly confronted with the necessity for political strife, with the prospect of municipal government and taxation, with all the keen and sometimes bitter rivalries of present-day business methods, and with, alas, some adventurers all

too ready to take advantage of their simple-heartedness, and no one will wonder if it took the people some little time to gather themselves up and accommodate their lives to such new conditions.

But more important in its bearing upon the feeling of the people was the sudden realization of the fact that, after long years of undisputed possession of large privileges on the great areas around them, limitations were being put upon their operations by the incoming of strangers, who, driving stakes here and there, barred the old ways and the old fields—sometimes unjustly—against a people who could only be expected to learn slowly that their domain must some time be curtailed.

Meanwhile, in the East, matters had been ripening for Confederation. Upper and Lower Canada, united in 1841, had come, in 1864, to a place where legislation was deadlocked and clamped. The two ways out of the *impasse* were annexation or Confederation; but men like George Brown and John A. Macdonald intended to die British subjects. Perhaps there are few more thrilling incidents on record in British history than the meeting between Brown and Macdonald on June 15th, 1864, which came as a result of an offer from the former, the strong, dour, passionate Scot, who suppressed his personal and political feelings in order to open the way out of the deadlock into

Confederation. Conferences in Charlottetown, Quebec and old London were held, piloted around the snags by the wonderful tact of Macdonald, and on July 1st, 1867, Queen Victoria, of immortal memory, "proclaimed" the Dominion of Canada, consisting of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec (Prince Edward Island stayed out until 1873). There is more than legend for the assertion that Canada was called "Dominion" rather than "Kingdom" because a Canadian member of the London Conference, with the vision of a continent-wide Canada, quoted the seventy-second Psalm, "His dominion shall be from sea to sea." In any case, George Brown, in his prophetic way, had kept Rupert's Land before the people of the East through *The Globe*, though it finally fell to the lot of his political opponents to link the oceans by driving the iron horses through the mountains to the western tide.

The task of accomplishing the federal union of the old provinces once finished, in 1867, no time was lost by eastern statesmen in reaching out for the great lone land towards the setting sun. Two Liberals, Howland and Macdougall, had accepted office in Macdonald's Government on the plea that they should see the whole plan through, and one of these, Hon. William Macdougall, was sent to the Imperial Government with Sir George E. Cartier, who had

brought Quebec into line, to arrange for the acquisition of the West. Despite opinions expressed to the contrary, this was not hard to arrange. The Hudson's Bay Company, which had held the charter for two hundred years, recognized the difficulty of continuing their control of the changing situation. My father was at that time a member of the Council of Assiniboia, a magistrate, and a close friend of Governor McTavish, and he said the Hudson's Bay Company were glad to be rid of responsibility, so that they could adapt their business to new conditions, which they have done in a wonderful way. So the Company relinquished their charter rights to the Imperial Government for £300,000 sterling, certain reservations around their trading posts, along with one-twentieth of the land in the fertile belt; and then the Imperial Government were to transfer the vast territory to Canada, which, in turn, undertook to respect and conserve the rights of the people in the area thus added to the Dominion. This arrangement was concluded in the spring of 1869, and it was then expected that the purchase money would be paid on the 1st of October following, and that probably on the 1st of December the Queen's Proclamation would issue, setting forth these facts and fixing the date of the actual transfer to Canada.

So far all was well. The ideas leading to the



acquisition of this great territory were in every sense statesmanlike, and, if carefully carried out, were calculated to be of the greatest benefit to the people in the new territory and to the Dominion as well. We cannot too thankfully pay tribute unstinted to the men whose ideals were for an ever-widening horizon, and who felt that "no pent-up Utica should confine the powers" of the young nation just beginning to stretch out and exercise its giant limbs. Once the older provinces were brought into a Confederation it was wise to look forward to a Canada extending from ocean to ocean, and to take the necessary legal steps to secure the West as part of the Dominion. But just there, after the negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company through the Imperial Government were well in hand and were being wisely concluded, the Canadian authorities seem to have blundered by overlooking the fact that the new territory had a population of some ten thousand people, who ought at least to have been informed in some official way of the bargain that was being made, and of the steps being taken to secure and guard their rights and privileges.

Rumors of the transaction certainly reached the Red River through unauthoritative sources, only to produce uneasiness there. Before the transfer was completed men were sent out to open roads from the Lake of the Woods into

the settlement. Surveying parties entered the new territory and went hither and thither, driving their stakes and erecting their mounds, to the bewilderment of the people, and, to cap all, a governor, the Hon. Wm. Macdougall, was despatched to the Red River before the old Government was in any sense superseded and before a Queen's Proclamation, which would have been instantly recognized by all classes of the community, was issued. The Selkirk settlers and other people of that class, however perplexed at the procedure, had the utmost confidence that the Canadian authorities would ultimately do substantial justice in the recognition of all just and lawful claims and privileges enjoyed by the inhabitants of the new territory, and hence awaited patiently, though somewhat anxiously, the developments of time. But the French half-breeds (commonly called "the French" in the Red River colony)—more fiery and easily excited, more turbulent of spirit and warlike in disposition, accustomed to passages at arms with any who would cross their path, and withal, as a class, less well-informed on current events than their white brethren—were not satisfied with a course that seemed to them to place their rights in jeopardy, and so they rose up in a revolt that, alas, while possibly accomplishing some of the objects that could have been reached by constitutional means, left

its red stream across that early page of our history.

The one unfathomed mystery of this period was the visit of the Hon. Joseph Howe, Secretary of State, to Fort Garry and the settlements on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Mr. Howe occupied the office which is now the Department of the Interior, and hence the affairs of the West came under his purview. He came to the Red River before the actual outbreak. He stayed at the hotel in the village most of the time and received callers. He also visited somewhat amongst the people with Mr. W. E. Sanford, of Hamilton, who was out on mercantile business. Mr. Howe would have no authority to issue a proclamation, but the marvel is that, as a member of the Government of Canada, he did not make some effort to assure the settlers that the rights of the people would be protected. This would have gone far to allay the trouble and undermine Riel, who was beginning to foment trouble; but he departed without making any statement; and when he met Macdougall on the Dakota plains it was too cold a day for conference, and all he told Macdougall was that there was uneasiness amongst the people in the West. Howe did not undertake the trip for his health; he was near seventy, and the journey back to St. Paul over the frozen plain, camping out at times, shortened his days. Some say that

Howe's sympathy had always been with the "under dog," and that he found on his visit west that there was much justification for the discontent, and that he preferred to say nothing until he could get back to Ottawa; but by the time he got back to Ottawa it was too late to arrest the impending revolt. Macdougall, who seems to have taken a worthy part and a leading part in all the earlier negotiations for the acquisition of the West, became the victim of circumstances in the closing chapters; and when he got into the mesh of these circumstances his judgment was not sound enough to help him out. He naturally felt much aggrieved at the turn affairs were taking on the Red River, and in his disappointment is said to have blamed Howe for adding to the uneasiness of the western people. If this means active fomenting of the trouble, it seems to be practically beyond the remotest possibility; and so the mystery, like many another, will remain for all time; but it is clear to us who recall the situation, that for some reason or other, which doubtless was good in his own eyes, Mr. Howe, who had a very strenuous trip, seems to the onlooker to have lost a great opportunity for conserving the public peace. In any case, he had scarcely turned his back when Louis Riel cried havoc, and let loose the flame of revolt against the incoming of Canadian authority.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *REBELLION AFOOT.*

“THE French are off to drive back the Governor!” These words, somewhat excitedly uttered by one of my brothers, and addressed to my father, made up the first intimation I remember having that something serious was on foot; yet I recall the exact words as distinctly as if they had been spoken yesterday, and most of the acts in the drama of the rebellion, whose actual outbreak they announced, are indelibly stamped upon my memory. It was in October, 1869, and my brother had just come home from the morning service in Kildonan Church, over which, upon that day, the shadow of the situation had been cast. The fact that the news first came to us in this way throws a curious sidelight on the primitive life of the time. The churchyard was the modern representative of the Athenian market-place, so far as the giving and receiving of news was concerned. The settlement had no telegraphic communication with the outside world; the solitary post-office was miles away, and mails, in any case, were few and far apart. A few of the people subscribed for an eastern paper,

which was comparatively old before it reached its destination, and the local paper was doubtless often greatly at a loss for "copy." Moreover, it must be remembered that in certain seasons of the year the settlers were away from home haying, wood-cutting, etc., during the whole week. Saturday evening, however, they were all back, and on Sabbath morning, except in cases of sickness or some similar cause, they were all wending their way in good time to the church.

The men often gathered in knots in the churchyard before the service, that they might get abreast of the times. Some stay-at-home man, perhaps the school-teacher, who was always looked upon as a species of encyclopædia, or someone who was in touch with the inhabitants of Fort Garry, gave what information he could as to current events. The Sabatarian ideas of these people were, for the most part, strict enough; but I suppose they looked on this parliament as a sort of family gathering to talk over family affairs, and as a general thing the news imparted was not startling enough to disturb that air of devoutness which they sought to cultivate when they entered the portals of the place of worship; but on the day just mentioned the intelligence was of unusual moment, and, perchance, may have deepened the earnestness with which they

joined in the prayer for the preservation of peace to Him "who breaketh the bow in sunder and burneth the chariot in the fire."

"The French are off to drive back the Governor!" repeated my brother, fresh from the churchyard conclave, and though it was the first I recall hearing of active trouble, doubtless the announcement was not wholly unexpected by my father. It seemed that for some weeks previous to this, Louis Riel, who was to have the "bad eminence" of leading two rebellions, had been holding meetings amongst the French half-breeds, and, doubtless, moved by others far and near, had been delivering fiery orations in regard to the rumored changes, which he claimed were to put in jeopardy all the rights they held dear. It may as well be admitted that the situation, as they saw it, gave him some plausible ground on which to work. Perhaps it was due to the extreme difficulty of getting into communication with the far West, without telegraphs or railways and with only occasional mails, that official word, with explanations, had not been sent out from Ottawa. It took many weeks to get a letter through in the best of times, and just at that time things were worse than usual in that regard. All that the settlers really knew was that Governor Macdougall had been sent out, and that quite a number of not very prudent persons, who claimed to be agents

of the Dominion, had been let loose in the territory. And so, in the absence of ordinary precautions on the part of the Canadian authorities, Louis Riel found his opportunity. The signal fires of rebellion were lit on the banks of the Red River and called sympathisers from out on the great plains.

This Louis Riel was a stormy character in his lifetime, and his ghost is not yet laid. Every now and then it stalks abroad in the speeches of men who think that people of French extraction are a long-suffering race in Canada. Riel, as I remember him, was not a fighting man himself, but he had a power to stir up others to fight which amounted to positive genius. He came properly by it, because he was a born agitator. His father of the same name had a little mill on the Seine in St. Boniface, and was widely known as "the Miller of the Seine." His hand was against all constituted authority in a degree that would have endeared him to the heart of a modern anarchist. He could make fiery, inflammatory speeches, and had an extraordinary influence over the French element. All these qualities he bequeathed to his son, who had the additional advantage of some education received at Laval University. He came back to the Red River country from his course there with all the prestige it gave in those days, when very few had visited eastern





LOUIS "DAVID" RIEL

Who had the "Bad Eminence" of Leading Two Rebellions.



institutions; and he found the occasion ripe for the kind of leadership he desired. He revelled in the plaudits of his fellow-countrymen, for his inordinate vanity always craved adulation. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that Riel's fiery speeches fell on very inflammable material. These French half-breeds were naturally of a wild spirit—daring rough-riders of the plains, who brooked no interference from anyone, and who had passed through many a conflict with their darker brethren on the wild wastes of the West. Once get men of that sort to feel that they are fighting for their homes and the rights of their families, put modern weapons into their hands, and in their own kind of warfare they are dangerous men to attack. Being of that stamp, and being made to feel that they were to be trodden upon, they rose in armed insurrection and, as a first step, went on the errand noted in the opening words of this chapter. No one can defend an act such as theirs, even had it not led to some of the deplorable events which followed. Though many can see extenuating circumstances, armed rebellion is a serious business; and if there is a place for it in the present state of the world, it is when all constitutional means have been exhausted, and people accomplish a revolution in the face of some iniquitous and tyrannous government. Tubal Cain's offensive weapon is

an instrument of last resort, only to be taken up when every other arbitrament has failed; and this we say, though we agree

That while Oppression lifts its head,  
Or a tyrant would be lord,  
While we may thank him for the plough,  
We won't forget the sword.

But the case before us was far short of that. At best Riel and his men were starting to fight the shadows of events which might never come, even though those shadows seemed to their kindled imaginations to be portents of dire disasters heading in their direction. No threat had been made against these people, and they should have known that no act of robbery or of deprivation of rights had ever been permitted ultimately by the flag under whose folds they were to be governed. Besides, they had no right to assume to speak for the whole country before consulting with others who lived in it. Why did they not take counsel with the Selkirk settlers and men of that class who, being of less nomadic habits, had larger settled interests in the territory, and who, moreover, had always been better informed as to events that were transpiring? Why did they not see whether some concerted and peaceful action on the part of the whole population could not be planned to attain the ends in view and conserve the rights of the inhabitants which seemed to be threatened?

But I have never felt like cherishing bitter feelings against the rank and file of Riel's men. They were ignorant men, easily imposed on by superior minds, and there is good reason to believe that there were many influences brought to bear on them besides that of Louis Riel. He, of course, was the chief agent; and, after knowing a good deal about him in various ways, and after hearing the legal giants and alienists battling for his life as he was nearing the gallows, it is difficult to say whether he was knave or lunatic, or partly both. Let the reader follow the story and arrive at a verdict.

Of course, the rebels had been organizing and arming for some time, though, as a matter of fact, men of that class always had their guns at hand. They began to gather in St. Norbert, up the Red River, and their first overt act was to erect a fence across the trail by which the new Governor would come to Fort Garry; and around this locality Riel, who had been addressing meetings in the French parishes, soon had some three or four hundred men. They made headquarters at the house of the Rev. Father Richot, the parish priest of St. Norbert, who was without doubt actively a partaker in Riel's sins of revolt. In this house the rebels established a council chamber, electing John Bruce a figure-head president, but Riel, the real moving spirit, as secretary. One of their first acts was to indite the following to

the Hon. Wm. Macdougall and send it to him by special courier.

“*Monsieur*,—Le Comité National des Metis de la Riviere Rouge, intime à Monsieur W. Macdougall l’ordre de ne pas entrer sur le Territoire du Nord-Ouest sans une permission spéciale de ce comité.

“Par ordre du Président,

“JOHN BRUCE.

“LOUIS RIEL, Secrétaire.

“Daté à St. Norbert, Riviere Rouge,

“Ce 21e Jour d’Octobre, 1869.”

Two of Macdougall’s staff pluckily rode up to the barricade, and Captain Cameron, Sir Charles Tupper’s son-in-law, ordered the rebels to “take away that blasted fence”; but the men on duty simply caught the horses of the aides by the bridles and turned them back on the road to Pembina, where Macdougall was quartered. Governor McTavish, at Fort Garry, was informed of these proceedings, but he was a dying man and could not be expected to take much active share in anything. Later on, when somewhat better for a time, he issued a proclamation roundly denouncing all Riel’s high-handedness.

From that date onward Riel established blockade on the road by which all traffic and mails came to the Red River by way of St. Paul, Minnesota. No one could go either way

without Riel's pass, and some rather amusing incidents took place. Mr. W. E. Sanford (afterwards Senator), who, for himself and the City of Hamilton had the honor of first opening regular trade between Eastern Canada and the Red River, had come up to the country with Joseph Howe. Howe left before the barricade was put up; but Sanford, who was merely on a business trip, found his way blocked when he started home. He appealed to Mr. Bannatyne, the most prominent of the Fort Garry merchants, and Bannatyne sent for Riel to come to his place. He introduced Sanford, who, though not generally disposed that way, ordered in two bottles of champagne, a new luxury in that country; and by the time Riel had well sampled the delusive drink he granted the Hamilton wholesaler a pass beyond the barricade. After passing the barricade, Sanford gave Macdougall the not very cheering news of the situation. The Governor, of course, was the special object of search at the fence on the side coming into the country, and every equipage about which a Governor could be concealed was scrutinized as keenly as the cars are searched by lynx-eyed trainmen in the season when tramps are stealing free rides across the country. A well-known Kildonan settler, Donald Gunn, was bringing in from the St. Paul direction a Presbyterian missionary, a magisterial-looking man; and, as Gunn

liked a joke, he said, in answer to enquiry as to who he had, "Our governor." In a moment there was trouble, and Gunn, thinking the joke had gone far enough, added, "I mean one of the governors of our church," upon hearing which the bars were let down for the man of peace, who was thankful that he held a commission from an authority higher than earthly potentates.

Every effort short of force, which was not available, was being used by the local authorities, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and his Council, to secure a peaceable solution of the difficulties impending; but to all these the rebels turned a deaf ear, and a few days after the erection of the barricade a mounted troop of them, under command of Ambroise Lepine, rode to the place where Governor Macdougall had come upon British territory, and warned him to leave before nine o'clock next morning. They returned the following day at eight to see this programme carried out, and the Governor, having no other recourse in the presence of arms than to obey, recrossed the boundary line to Pembina, in the State of Dakota.

A striking figure was this Ambroise Lepine, as I remember seeing him in Fort Garry in the heyday of his power—a man of magnificent physique, standing fully six feet three and built in splendid proportion, straight as an



arrow, with hair of raven blackness, large aquiline nose and eyes of piercing brilliance; a man of prodigious strength, a skilled rough-rider and, withal, a dangerous subject to meet in conflict. He had great influence amongst his compatriots, and by reason, doubtless, of his physical prowess and striking military appearance, soon obtained control of the armed movements.

But winter was coming on apace, and the rebels began to look around for more comfortable quarters, and so, on the 3rd of November, they rode down to Fort Garry and, in spite of the protest of Doctor Cowan, the officer in charge under Governor McTavish, took possession of it, with all its stores and abundant supplies. Riel, who had seized the furniture which Governor Macdougall was bringing for Government House, proceeded to utilize it for his own apartments; and as the provision of the fort was ample in meat and drink and raiment, the rebel chief and his followers wore fine linen, the best of cloth capotes, silk-worked moccasins, and they fared sumptuously every day.

It has been fashionable, in some quarters, to accuse the Hudson's Bay Company of conniving at this seizure and at the rebellion generally, but the utter absurdity of assertions like these is apparent to anyone who thinks upon the subject. The Company had parted with

their control of the country, which indeed was, in the nature of things, getting beyond their domination. They had nothing to gain and everything to lose by having the whole territory in a state of unrest, to the serious detriment of their trade, and were certainly to suffer a loss, that could not well be appraised, by having Riel and his following quartered upon them for nearly a year. Besides this, Governor McTavish, the head of the Company in the country, on the 16th of November, in view of the fact that Riel had called a convention from all parts of the settlement, issued a proclamation denouncing in the strongest terms the insurrectionary movement, calling upon those engaged in it to disperse to their homes, and with all the weight of his authority asking the convention to employ, in any movement in which they might engage to secure their rights, only such means as were "lawful, constitutional, rational and safe." I remember, too, hearing my father, who visited Governor McTavish in his sick-room about this time, say that he never witnessed anything more pathetic than the way in which the Governor referred to the fact that the insurgents had hauled down the Union Jack and hoisted an ensign of their own device with *fleur-de-lis* and shamrock, and how he said, "As I saw, through my window, the hoisting of their rag on our old flagstaff, I almost choked with

mortification and shame." Add to these things, also, the fact that Riel, in the general convention held in February, after his entry into Fort Garry, made, according to the report in his own paper, the *New Nation*, a most bitter attack upon the Hudson's Bay Company, saying, amongst other things, that instead of having the prefix "honorable," they should have the title "shameful"—consider all this and the theory as to collusion between them becomes exceedingly chimerical.

As a matter of fact, Riel had inherited from his father, "the Miller of the Seine," a strong antipathy towards the Hudson's Bay Company, and fifteen years later, when he went into revolt on the Saskatchewan, this old animosity against the Company flashed out again and again.

Once the rebel leader had settled himself comfortably in the fort, he went to *The Nor'-Wester* printing office and ordered Doctor Bown to print a circular calling upon the people to come together to consider the situation. Bown refused and was put under arrest, while two men who could set type were hired to get out this convention call. Riel summoned a good many conventions, to give the outside world the impression that the people were being consulted; but he generally made up his mind beforehand that he would have his own way, no matter what the people wanted.

It is sometimes asked how it was that the

other inhabitants of the country did not rise up and put down the rebellion; and perhaps the question is a reasonable one, though the abortive attempts made by some well-meaning persons in that direction suggest, in some degree, the answer. It is well known that the white settlers, at first, never dreamed that the movement would be carried as far as it was eventually. It is equally well known that a great many of the rebels themselves never contemplated the possibility of a movement fraught with so much danger and loss to others. Many with whom I have spoken in later years said they thought that all that would be necessary to secure the promise of the rights they imagined to be in jeopardy, was to make the open protest against the entry of the new Governor. But the wine of success went to Riel's head; he became intoxicated with power, and the sequel is matter of history. It must be borne in mind, also, that the settlers were justified in saying that the quarrel was not theirs, especially in view of the muddling that helped to bring it about. Their advice had not been asked at the outset, and though they had faith that in the end justice would be done by Canada, they were very much in the dark over the whole affair. In the report of Colonel Dennis, chief of the staff of surveyors, and Governor Macdougall's deputy in the new territory, the matter is put in concise and very intelligible shape. The Colonel had

gone amongst the white settlers, who, it must be remembered, had neither arms nor ammunition in store, and enquired as to the possibility of raising a force to escort the new Governor in, and he gives the following as a fair presentation of their views:

"We (the English-speaking settlers) feel confidence in the future administration of the government of this country under Canadian rule; at the same time we have not been consulted in any way as a people on entering into the Dominion. The character of the new government has been settled in Canada without our being consulted. We are prepared to accept it respectfully, obey the laws and become good subjects; but when you present to us the issue of a conflict with the French party, with whom we have hitherto lived in friendship, backed up as they would be by the Roman Catholic Church (which seems probable by the course taken by the priests), in which conflict it is almost certain the aid of the Indians would be invoked, and perhaps obtained by that party, we feel disinclined to enter upon it, and think *that the Dominion should assume the responsibility of establishing amongst us what it and it alone has decided upon.*"

To any one who knows the situation this looks like an extremely reasonable stand to take. The references to the priests had ground in the fact that the rebels at the barrier had

their council meetings in the house of P  re Richot, that gatherings for discussion were held on Sundays after the church services, and that O'Donaghue, the deepest and the most dangerous of all the rebel leaders, a Fenian at heart, was studying for the priesthood at St. Boniface when the outbreak began. The reference to the Indians is amply justified by the kinship between them and the rebels, and by the fact that such aid was invoked and obtained with terrible effect under much less reasonable circumstances and against heavier odds by the same parties in the second rebellion. In fact, it is well known to some that only the strong influence of Hudson's Bay men like Archibald McDonald, of Qu'Appelle, and Robert Campbell, of Swan Lake, and others, prevented an Indian uprising in 1869. In short, the white settlers felt strongly that efforts at resistance to Riel would only feed the flames, which at the beginning did not seem likely to amount to much.

Later on, when the growing folly of Riel had completely estranged the white settlers, the latter would have been utterly unable to make any successful move against the rebels, who held a stone-walled and bastioned fort, with all the military stores in rifle and cannon; and, as the *New Nation* (Riel's paper) said, they had "all the powder in the territory except a small damaged lot at Lower Fort Garry." As an

example of the kind of arms some of the loyalists were provided with, I recall seeing more than one man at the rendezvous afterwards in Kildonan, armed with a bludgeon, weighted with lead; but to suggest an attack on an artillery-defended and walled fort with weapons of that sort was not very wise, to say the least.

There had been a time when a large portion of the French population did not follow Riel in his resort to arms, though they, in common with nearly all the people of the country, felt somewhat keenly anxious as to their rights under the incoming Government. On looking up records I find that my father, then a magistrate and a member of the Council of Assiniboia (the governing body in Hudson's Bay Company days), seconded, with the Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne as mover, the following resolution: "That Messrs. Dease and Goulet be appointed to collect as many of the more respectable of the French community as possible, and with them proceed to the camp of the party who intend to intercept Hon. Mr. Macdougall, and endeavor to procure their peaceable dispersion." That the men sent failed in their mission does not disprove the fact that they had large loyal support amongst their own people. Moreover, we find that after Riel had seized Fort Garry he was at one time on the point of consenting to the Hudson's Bay Company continuing in authority until a committee

of French and English could treat with Mr. Macdougall or with the Dominion direct, when a rumor that the Canadians around were about to move on Fort Garry put an end to the matter.

Moreover, there was a time, even after the rebellion had gone some length, when, through the influence of Mr. Bannatyne, three well-known French half-breeds, Francois Nolin, Augustin Nolin and Pierre Perreault, agreed to secure a meeting of English and French to discuss their claims and send a statement of these to Mr. Macdougall, whom, if he promised their fair consideration, they would bring into the country in spite of Riel. It is said that these men were actually gathering their compatriots together, when a report reached them that the Canadian party and the settlers were combining to attack the French. This seemed to the loyalist half-breeds, of whom there were many at the beginning, to mean that the French element was going to be coerced without regard to their claims; and it had the natural, though lamentable, effect of practically solidifying that element behind Riel.



## CHAPTER IX.

### *COUNTER-MOVEMENTS.*

DESPITE the opinion given by the white settlers in the Red River country to the effect that armed efforts to suppress the rebellion would only make matters worse, in view of the fact that the rebels held all the guns and the ammunition in a walled fort, some of these efforts unfortunately continued to be made. This was due in great measure to the presence of Mr. Macdougall at the border, naturally impatient with everybody and everything which prevented his entry into the promised land, and to the further fact that newcomers into the country, under the general pen-name of "Friends of Canada," kept urging him "on no account to leave Pembina." The Governor on the frontier, sending communications of various kinds, was a constant irritant to the rebels, as proven by the fact that when Macdougall and Dennis finally left Pembina, about the middle of December, 1869, the rebels in large numbers left Fort Garry for their homes, subject to call if any further efforts should be made (as they unhappily were) against the French. Both Macdougall and Dennis appear to have acted throughout in an honorable and

perfectly sincere way, and we should not forget that Macdougall had rendered great service to the West in the years past; but the long distance and slow communication with Ottawa, coupled with the irresponsible advice of the "Friends of Canada" in the settlement, rendered their task too difficult to be accomplished.

Slow and imperfect communication with Ottawa, there being no telegraphs and very uncertain mails, probably accounts for the unfortunate issue of a proclamation, purporting to have Royal sanction, by Mr. Macdougall on the 1st of December, 1869. As mentioned in a preceding chapter, it had been expected that on the 1st day of December the new territory would have been formally transferred to Canada by the Imperial Government; and so on that day, Mr. Macdougall, thinking it was high time to act with a show of authority, issued a proclamation in the Queen's name, appointing himself as Governor, and another, signed by himself as Governor, appointing Colonel Dennis his deputy within the territory, with power to raise and equip a force wherewith to suppress the rebellious element. Macdougall acted on the line of what was projected when he and Cartier arranged the terms in England for the transfer of the territory, and he was not wholly without reason in acting on that general understanding, even though he had not been notified by the Ottawa authorities.

However, the transfer had not been made, and for the unwarrantable use he had made of Her Majesty's name Macdougall received what can only be described as a hot letter from the Hon. Joseph Howe. Between these two gentlemen there was apparently no love lost.

Riel was evidently kept better posted by someone than Macdougall, for the rebel chief knew that the Governor had no authority for issuing a Royal proclamation, and so he simply laughed at it. Governor McTavish, of the Hudson's Bay Company, had received no notice of a transfer having taken place, and told Macdougall so in a letter afterwards; but Colonel Dennis thought that Macdougall's proclamation was properly authorized, and so he, enlisting the help of others, proceeded to raise a force. He found difficulty in getting the white settlers interested, and expressed himself rather strongly in consequence; but later on he came to know the situation more fully, and in a letter expressed "heartfelt thankfulness that his proceedings had not been the cause (even to the extent of a drop) of bloodshed amongst the people"; and on December 9th Colonel Dennis issued what he called a peace proclamation, in which he said: "I now call on and order the loyal party in the North-West Territories to cease further action under the appeal to arms made by me." He believed then that a peaceful solution ought to be reached; and it

is very interesting to know that Colonel Dennis came to the conclusion outlined in his proclamation after having received a strong letter from Archbishop Machray, of the Anglican Church. The Archbishop was a member of the Council of Assiniboia, and during the whole trouble was a tower of strength to the country. There was much of the soldier in Archbishop Machray, not only in his commanding appearance, but in the intensity and ability of a great nature. In the letter to Colonel Dennis, he says frankly that he had gone to the first meeting of the Council "prepared to recommend a forcible putting down of the insurrection"; but when he saw that counter-movements against Riel, who had all the military stores, etc., only made the situation worse, he advised further effort by negotiation to secure peace and to avoid unnecessary and fruitless bloodshed.

But both before and after this date there were some restless "Friends of Canada" who every now and then started something. There were some Canadian Government supplies stored in a building belonging to Doctor Schultz, and when Riel took possession of Fort Garry a number of Canadians, a mere handful of forty-five men, gathered there to protect these provisions. This was a sort of defiance flung in the face of Riel, who claimed that they were assembling to attack him, and in a day or two some three hundred or so of the rebels, with

rifles and a nine-pounder gun, marched over from the fort near-by and demanded surrender within fifteen minutes. There was nothing else to do but to give up the wooden building and go as prisoners to Fort Garry, as required. Amongst these loyalists were many who afterwards became very prominent in western public and mercantile life, and one of them, Dr. J. H. O'Donnell, looking back in later years, considered that the gathering at Schultz's house was, to say the least, imprudent, and that it was contrary to the advice of Colonel Dennis, who had said to Schultz: "Shut up your premises and let the government property take its chance."

Other men who were in that company, and who later on took leading places in Winnipeg, were Doctor Lynch, George D. McVicar, Thos. Lusted, and the well-known millionaire hardware merchant, ex-Mayor James H. Ashdown; but the probability is that Riel wanted an excuse to get Schultz, the leader of the Canadian element, whose irrepressible energy and daring made him a dangerous man for the rebels to leave at large. So they put him in solitary confinement in one of the cheerless stone bastions, and the general understanding was they would find some pretext for bringing his career to a close; but they were baulked of their prey. Though I knew Schultz well in later years, and received from him shortly

before his death a special engraving of Fort Garry inscribed by him "in memory of the stirring events in early days," I never asked him how he got the pocket-knife that enabled him to escape. The common story (but I have some doubts as to its truth) was that in some food sent in by a friend there was a knife concealed. With it Schultz cut the buffalo-robe, which was his bed, into strips. These he fastened together in order to let himself down from the window. He was a heavy man, and the line broke, letting him down with a force that injured a leg. He was scantily clad for the blizzard of a January night and, in the darkness, after his fall, he had some difficulty in getting his bearings; but, finding his direction, he eluded a guard and ran as best he could down to my father's house, five or six miles away, in Kildonan. He and my father had not always seen eye to eye on public matters, for my father was a member of the Hudson's Bay Council of Assiniboia, and Schultz had always taken strong ground on some matters against that body. However, if any such coldness did exist between them previous to that night, the coming of Schultz for refuge to my father's house was but another instance of that shrewd, far-sighted knowledge of human nature for which he was always noted. Apart altogether from my father's well-known contempt for the alleged government of Riel, he was too much

of a Highlander to close his door against even an enemy when he was wearied and hard-hunted, or else he would have been unworthy of the name that has become synonymous with hospitality, and has been immortalized by Scott in the famous meeting of Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu.

I remember well the arrival of Schultz at our house. It was in the grey dawn, and a cold morning at that, when a knocking came at the door, which my father rose and opened. I can recall his surprised exclamation, "Bless me, doctor, is this really you?" Then I can see the fugitive enter, thinly clad, tall, haggard and gaunt, and as soon as he had assured himself that there were no servants in the house who might betray him, he told the story of his escape as we have just related it. My father escorted his guest upstairs, watched over him while he slept, and all that afternoon the two remained there, conversing only in whispers, so that their voices would not be heard by any who might come into the house. Again and again that day Riel's scouts, on their red-blanketed horses, passed by the door, looking for their escaped prisoner, concerning whom Riel said to the Rev. George Young, "The guards are out looking for him, and they have orders to shoot him on sight."

Meanwhile my brother Alexander had gone into town and secured from his friends a pair

or two of pistols, which were duly brought and handed upstairs, where a new programme was made out. Schultz was determined that he would never be taken alive, hence he decided that if the scouts entered the house he would sell his life as dearly as possible and neither give nor take quarter. For two days he remained there, and on the second night my father's favorite horse, "Barney," was hitched up, and the brother above mentioned drove the hunted man, by an unfrequented road, to the Indian settlement near Selkirk, whence, accompanied by the faithful Scotch half-breed guide, Joseph Monkman, he made that terrible mid-winter journey on foot to eastern Canada. Afterwards we heard that some of the scouts, who had searched other houses, strongly suspected his real whereabouts, but that either out of respect to my father, who was well known to most of them, or from dread of the desperate man they were hunting, they concluded not to enter.

In after years, when I heard Sir John Schultz (for he was knighted later for his services to the Empire) say that he "had still the shattered remnants of a good constitution," I used to account for the "shattering" by thinking of the desperate leap from the prison, the running with maimed limb and scanty clothing six miles in an arctic atmosphere, and then the fearful journey on foot across the rocky shores and



wind-swept bays of Lake Superior to the cities of the East. Whether he and my father were warm friends before or not, they certainly were after that experience in the "City of Refuge"; and born orator as Sir John was, he never made a more graceful allusion in spoken words than he did when, as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, at the unveiling of the Seven Oaks monument, he spoke of the man who, at great personal risk, opened the door of welcome to him in his extremity.

Meanwhile the other prisoners captured in the Schultz house were detained in Fort Garry. Riel was then arranging a slate for his proposed Provisional Government, and Mr. Donald A. Smith (afterwards Lord Strathcona) about this time arrived from Montreal as a Special Commissioner from the Dominion Government to endeavor to settle the Red River difficulties. As to Riel's Provisional Government, it may suffice here to say that it was to be in general control of the country. The Hudson's Bay Company Government, though not officially superseded in the West, was practically helpless in the Red River country for the time being, and the Dominion Government had not as yet been officially "proclaimed" in the new territory.

The coming of Mr. Smith was warmly welcomed, by the loyalist settlers especially, to whom he was well known as a high official in

the Hudson's Bay Company, and his appointment as a Commissioner to represent Canada in the Red River is another evidence of John A. Macdonald's remarkable sagacity in choosing men for strategic posts. Macdonald and Smith had some hot passages in later years in Ottawa over Pacific Scandal matters, but still later on they became good friends again. The particular points to be emphasized here about Mr. Smith in connection with his visit to the Red River at this time were his extraordinary tact and power of self-control under insults from Riel, along with his persistent Scottish determination, which could be patient, but which would reach its objective some time. He entered the fort as a Hudson's Bay official, but when Riel demanded his business he indicated that he had an errand also from the Canadian Government. Riel asked for his papers, possibly intending to destroy them and then discredit Mr. Smith before the people as one who had come to interfere without authority. Mr. Smith said he had left his papers with his secretary, Mr. Hardisty, at Pembina. Riel offered to send for them, but Smith replied that the papers would remain on the other side of the line till he had a guarantee of their safety if brought into the Red River country. Finally a loyalist party of half-breeds from the Dauphinais settlement agreed to fetch them, and when Riel sent a guard to intercept them they

imprisoned the guard. Then Riel came to Laboncan Dauphinais' house and found his guard a prisoner; but when he attempted to interfere a well-known half-breed hunter, Pierre Laveiller, put a revolver to Riel's head and told him to get into line with the rest, who were taking Mr. Hardisty to the fort with the papers, or he would put an end to him. I heard the whole story told some time afterwards by one of the loyalist party, Angus McKay (a brother of James, mentioned in a former chapter), and it was ample evidence for the fact that a great many of the leading half-breeds of the country were not with Riel in his extreme attitudes. When Mr. Smith got the papers, he told Riel that they contained a commission from the Dominion Government, which he would read to a gathering of settlers to be called by Riel on January 19th.

About a thousand people assembled in the open air inside Fort Garry on January 19th to hear Mr. Smith. As the thermometer stood at twenty-five below zero, one could hardly think of this as a deliberative gathering; but they were a hardy lot, and the proceedings were lively enough to keep everyone warm. At the outset Mr. Thomas Bunn was elected chairman; Riel, interpreter, and Judge Black, secretary. Then Mr. Smith refused to read his commission standing under the hybrid French-Fenian ensign of the rebel government, and the

Union Jack was displayed. Then Riel, who took most unaccountable turns occasionally, made some objection to Mr. Smith's reading at all, whereupon a well-known settler, Colin Inkster (now sheriff at Winnipeg), tall, spare and athletic, caught the doubtful rebel by the collar of the capote and pulled him down the steps. Riel, in a rage, threw off his coat, which fell on my father, but that big Highlander could look after himself, and Riel, saying "Pardon, monsieur," called out the guard. In a little while, however, Riel got over his outburst and the meeting went on. Mr. Smith read the letter from the Governor-General, Sir John Young, appointing him Commissioner, and also an impressive cablegram sent on behalf of Queen Victoria by Earl Granville to the Governor-General, and one can see the hand of the Queen herself in it. It is well worth reading now, so here it is:

"The Queen has heard with surprise and regret that certain misguided persons have banded together to oppose by force the entry of our future Lieutenant-Governor into our Territory in Red River. Her Majesty does not distrust the loyalty of her subjects in that settlement, and can only ascribe to misunderstanding and misrepresentation their opposition to a change planned for their advantage.

"She relies on your Government to use every effort to explain whatever misunderstanding

may have arisen—to ascertain their wants and conciliate the good will of the people of Red River Settlement; but in the meantime she authorizes you to signify to them the sorrow and displeasure with which she views the unreasonable and lawless proceedings which have taken place, and her expectation that if any parties have desires to express or complaints to make respecting their condition and prospects, they will address themselves to the Governor-General of Canada.

“The Queen expects from her representative that as he will be always ready to receive well-founded grievances, so will he exercise all the power and authority she entrusted to him in support of order and the suppression of unlawful disturbances.”

This message from the Queen seemed to come with great opportuneness, for at the conclusion of the reading of it a motion to adjourn until the following day to think matters over was proposed. Before the crowd dispersed John Burke, a somewhat eccentric member of a noted family living on the Assiniboine, demanded the release of the prisoners, a number of settlers joining in the demand; but Riel declined, and there was some more trouble before the crowd dispersed.

Next day Mr. Smith finished his reading of documents in which the Dominion Government declared its willingness to consider fully all the

matters which the people of the Red River country desired to bring before the Governor-General in Council. On motion of Riel himself, seconded by Mr. A. G. B. Bannatyne, it was agreed that a convention be called for the 25th of January, consisting of twenty each from the English and French population to consider the matters brought forward by Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what would be best for the country. Brief addresses were made by Archbishop Machray and Father Richot, and Riel, in closing, spoke as follows:

"Before this Assembly breaks up I cannot but express my feelings, however briefly. I came here with fear. We are not yet enemies, but we came very near being so. As soon as we understood each other we joined in demanding what our English fellow subjects, in common with us, believe to be our just rights. I am not afraid to say our just rights, for we all have rights. We claim no half rights, mind you, but all the rights we are entitled to. Those rights will be set forth by our representatives; and what is more, gentlemen, we will get them." If the military counter-movements against Riel had only ceased, as Colonel Dennis had suggested before he left the country with Macdougall on December 18th, there might have been peace through conference, for, as Lord Salisbury used to say, "Four honest men around a table can settle any question in the

world," unless behind one or more of them is the shadow of the drawn sword.

Shortly before the above meeting a highly interesting visitor to the Red River was Doctor (afterward Sir Charles) Tupper, who came most of the way with Mr. Smith, though he was not on public business. Doctor Tupper came to look after the welfare of his only daughter, wife of Captain Cameron, aide to Governor Macdougall. Tupper was not then a member of the Dominion Government, having generously withdrawn his admitted claims to a portfolio in order that Joseph Howe, once fiercely opposed to the Confederation idea, might be taken into camp and into office by John A. Macdonald; but Tupper was not the man to come and go without seeing what was afoot and giving such counsel as he thought advisable. He found his daughter at Pembina and then, at considerable risk, pushed on to Fort Garry to recover her personal luggage and furniture. He was ushered in to see Riel in council, with armed men all around. He introduced himself, told Riel what he wanted, and the rebel chief told him he would have the stuff sent back to Pembina; and so it was; but when Tupper was returning to Pembina he spent a night with Father Richot at St. Norbert. They talked over the whole situation, and Tupper did all he could to get the priest, who was one of Riel's most confidential men, to see that it

was madness to think of opposing the incoming of the Canadian Government, backed by the Imperial authorities; but the priest said the half-breeds were invincible. They could, he said, conduct an irregular warfare, moving hither and thither, so that the forces of Canada could never subdue them. Nothing that Tupper could say in the way of proof for his statements shook Richot's inflated faith in the invincibility of the half-breeds. Riel called at the house in the morning, but Tupper did not waste any more breath, since Riel was *par excellence* vain and confident. So the Nova Scotia doctor returned with his daughter, and left Riel and Richot to find out their mistake for themselves.



## CHAPTER X.

### *EFFORTS FOR COMMON GROUND.*

THE Convention of the Forty, twenty English and twenty French, which was the outcome of the open-air meeting where Commissioner Smith's papers were read, met in Fort Garry on January 25th, 1870, and remained in session about three weeks. From the standpoint of intelligence and education the preponderance on the side of the English delegates was very marked, as one can say out of personal knowledge of the men; but from the standpoint of subserviency to Riel, and general pliability in the hands of this dictator, the French had it, although in spite of Riel there were some French members who were not putty in his hands. As this was the first representative gathering in the history of the West elected by the people themselves—though in some cases under pressure from the dictator—it is worth while to give their names and a few personal notes of the more prominent amongst them. Here is the list:

#### FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES.

*St. Charles.*

Baptiste Beauchemin.

*Point Coupee.*

Louis Lacerte.

Pierre Delorme.

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*St. Francois Xavier.*  
Xavier Pagè.  
Pierre Poitras.

*St. Paul's.*  
Pierre Thibert.  
Alex. Pagè.  
Magnus Birston.

*St. Norbert.*  
Pierre Paranteau.  
Norbert Laronce.  
B. Touton.

*St. Boniface.*  
W. B. O'Donaghue.  
Ambroise Lepine.  
Joseph Genton.  
Louis Schmidt.

*Oak Point.*  
Thomas Harrison.  
Charles Nolin.

*Point à Grouette.*  
George Klyne.

### ENGLISH REPRESENTATIVES.

*St. Peter's.*  
Rev. Henry Cochrane.  
Thomas Spence.

*St. Clement's.*  
Thomas Bunn.  
Alex. McKenzie.

*St. Andrew's.*  
Judge Black.  
Donald Gunn, sen.  
Alfred Boyd.

*St. Paul's.*  
Dr. C. J. Bird.

*St. John's.*  
James Ross.

*St. Mary's.*  
Kenneth McKenzie.

*Kildonan.*  
John Fraser.  
John Sutherland.

*St. James'.*  
George Flett.  
Robert Tait.

*Headingly.*  
John Taylor.  
Wm. Lonsdale.

*St. Margaret's.*  
Wm. Cummings.

*St. Anne's.*  
George Gunn.  
D. Spence.

*Winnipeg.*  
Alfred H. Scott.

The chairman of the convention was Judge Black, head of the law courts in the territory, a man of commanding intellect, of great forensic ability, and such noble bent of character that he had the utmost confidence of the whole

community. During the course of the convention we find speeches made by Judge Black on several occasions, in which occur passages of lofty and impassioned appeal.

Amongst the delegates were many men who even then were men of note. Henry Cochrane was the Church of England clergyman, much beloved by his people. Along with him was Thomas Spence, a man somewhat of the adventurer type, and erratic to the point of rattle-headedness. He appears in the picture group of Riel's first council, but was indignant later on, and said he was snapped by the camera while he was talking to some one of the group. He used to visit at our home and tell my father tales about some great estate that was coming to us from another branch of the clan in Scotland. After the rebellion he organized a republic of his own, with headquarters at Portage la Prairie, and reported it to the Home Government, who snuffed it out. Later he went in for the manufacture of salt on a large scale, but not much salt resulted. A man of considerable ability as a writer, he edited the *New Nation* for a time and did good service in suppressing its annexation sentiments. Donald Gunn was a remarkable scholar for the frontier and enjoyed a high reputation as a scientist. Doctor Bird was the beloved physician of the colony, and later on was Speaker of the Manitoba Legislature. Robert Tait was one of the best

known of the early freighters and business men, a man of marked ability, who organized the first system of ferries for Winnipeg. Alfred Boyd was a wealthy merchant, who later on was a member of the Manitoba Government. John Fraser was the first postmaster at Kildonan, and an able man. Several other delegates appear in other places in this story. The best existing detailed account of the convention is found in the *New Nation*, Riel's organ, with a very significant name. The only complete file of this paper to be found is in the possession of the discriminating and indefatigable Provincial Librarian of Manitoba, Mr. J. P. Robertson. This file, which was secured by purchase from Mr. William Coldwell, the ablest newspaperman of his time, tells an eloquent story, even in its appearance. The first page of it is entitled "The Red River Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 1"; the next page is blank, and on the following one we read "The New Nation, Volume 1, No. 1." The explanation is that Mr. Coldwell, whom I remember well as a gentlemanly, cultured Englishman, was just beginning the publication of his new venture, *The Red River Pioneer*, when Riel swooped down on the office, nipping the *Pioneer* in the bud, and establishing with its plant the *New Nation*, under control of his own following. Whoever reported the business of the Convention of the Forty did it well,

setting down the proceedings impartially and refraining from the running comments in which reporters sometimes indulge, to the mystification of the reader.

On the French side, the St. Boniface members, with Riel himself, were the controlling forces, and they succeeded in dominating the situation amongst their own people, except in the cases of Harrison, Nolin and Klyne. These three figured specially in connection with a motion which Riel introduced in the convention "off his own bat" on his favorite subject of hostility towards the Hudson's Bay Company. It read, "That all bargains with the Hudson's Bay Company be null and void; and that any arrangements with reference to the transfer of this country be carried on only with the people of this country." The suggestion to ignore the Company, which had been granted a charter by Royal Letters Patent two centuries before, and with whom both the Imperial and Canadian Governments had already dealt, was one of Riel's characteristically wild ideas. Harrison, Nolin and Klyne, who came from points outside the sphere of Riel's influence, voted with the English delegates and defeated the motion. Riel got very angry, cursed, and said, "The vote may go as it likes, but the measure must be carried." He then started in to abuse the three French delegates, but Nolin replied defiantly, and told Riel to mind his own business.

This angered Riel, who could not bear to be crossed, and as the convention adjourned for the day he went into Governor McTavish's sick-room and threatened him with death. He then had Doctor Cowan, the Hudson's Bay officer in charge, arrested; then he took Mr. A. G. B. Barnatyne prisoner, and wound up his madness by starting out after Nolin; but Nolin had a very wide circle of relatives and friends, who got together and would have put a sudden end to the rebel chief if he had not desisted.

At another point in the proceedings Riel undertook to lecture Mr. John (afterwards Senator) Sutherland, a very prominent Kildonan man who, by himself and family, did notable service for the country; but Mr. Sutherland replied hotly that he had been giving his time all winter, without fee or reward, for the good of the country; that he was there to speak for the people who sent him, and did not propose to be taught his duty by Louis Riel. Mr. Sutherland, whose father had been a soldier under Wellington, and two of whose sons, Alexander and Hector, became members of the Manitoba Legislature, the former being Attorney-General, gave specially valuable service to the Dominion in the Senate for many years. He was a man of singularly honorable and courageous character.

When Riel's outbreaks over the defeat of his

motion to ignore the Hudson's Bay Company had subsided the convention again got down to business. It discussed almost every possible phase of the country's future, and canvassed questions all the way from railroad construction to a standing army. An elaborate Bill of Rights was framed, embracing the chief demands of the people as to the rights to which they deemed themselves entitled, and these were presented to Commissioner Smith, whose replies were favorable in their tenor and as far as he could go within the limit of his commission. Then he asked the convention to send delegates to confer on the whole matter with the Government at Ottawa. This was accepted at once by the whole convention, and delegates were soon afterwards appointed in the persons of Judge Black, Father Richot, and Alfred H. Scott. The last named was not very popular on account of his annexation sentiments, which, however, found no scope on the mission to Ottawa.

The main business of the convention being over, Riel played his trump card by asking the delegates to authorize him to form a provisional government to carry on the affairs of the country, or rather to continue the government which he had already formed and to which he was willing to make some additions from the English side. Most of the English delegates at once took the position that they had no

instructions from their constituents on that point and that therefore they could take no action upon it which would bind the people who sent them to the convention. Riel, however, pressed the point, so that he would seem to the Canadian authorities to have the support of the whole country. The representatives from Kildonan, John Fraser and John Sutherland, declined to be parties to the idea unless it seemed the only way to prevent chaos in the country. The Hudson's Bay Company Government was moribund and their Governor too ill to act, and the Canadian Government, of course, had not entered into possession. So these two delegates went to Governor McTavish in his sick-room and asked his opinion as to the right course. His reply was a solemn one: "I am a dying man, and refuse to delegate my authority to any one; but for God's sake form a government of some kind, and restore peace and order in the country." Then the members of the convention, to prevent anarchy, agreed to the provisional government proposal. The majority of the members of the government were English, who joined in order to control matters as far as possible until Canada would get hold; but Riel remained as President and virtual dictator.

As there are some people even to this day who claim that Riel was loyal to British interests, though anxious about the privileges and



rights of his countrymen, it may be worth while to give a few extracts from the report of the convention, given in his own paper: "For my part I would like to see the power of Canada limited in this country; that's what I want." "England chose to neglect us for one or two centuries back, and I do not suppose we are under any very great obligations to keep her laws." "For my part, I do not want to be more British than I can help." There is no uncertain sound about these utterances.

One of the insidious influences running all through this period and complicating matters was that which made for annexation to the United States. It was not fostered or directed in any way by authority of the Republic, but by little groups of irresponsible individuals on both sides of the line, who would fain have used the Riel movement to further their plans. There is nothing in Riel's own attitude to show that he was pro-American, although it is quite patent that he was not pro-British. Riel, as his lawyers said years afterwards, was a good deal of a megalomaniac, and his deliberate aim, practically throughout life, was to found a kind of dictatorship in the West, subject to no one in particular except to himself. But American influences were at work trying to use his movement. A legless man at Pembina, named "Colonel" Stutsman, who had abundant brains and self-confidence, was a constant adviser of

the rebels, and found a particularly congenial co-operator in the Fenian O'Donaghue, who, as one of the Riel-O'Donaghue-Lepine triumvirate, had a large share in directing everything. In fact, O'Donaghue was perhaps the main-spring of the rebel machinery, since Riel was very apt to show his hand too soon, and thus invite defeat, while Lepine was simply the strong-armed man who, without the power or desire to reason much, carried out the orders of the other two. Then there was the *New Nation*, Riel's organ, edited by an American who was fond of such scare headlines as "British Columbia Defying the Dominion," "Annexation Our Manifest Destiny," etc., albeit Riel said he did not agree with those sentiments. There was also one Alfred H. Scott in Winnipeg, who succeeded, as we have seen, in getting into some prominent places by the voices of those who favored annexation, as well as Oscar Malmoras, the American consul there, who found sentiment against his annexation schemes becoming so strong that he left Winnipeg and returned south of the line in the midst of the troubles.

Yet annexation never got any foothold in the Red River country. The people were on friendly terms with the Americans and traded with them, but they had no intention of deserting the British flag. A great many of the French half-breeds did not favor annexation,

the Selkirk Settlers and the white people generally were adamant against it, while the English and Scotch half-breeds were equally firm. So it is not surprising that some of the most ardent annexationists began to find their propaganda having a boomerang effect to such an extent that they gradually eliminated themselves and vanished to the South.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *RIEL'S DESPERATION.*

WHEN the Convention of the Forty adjourned on the 11th February, 1870, it looked as if comparative peace was at hand, and there was a good deal of rejoicing on all sides. Most of the prisoners were released, and the prospects for a general gaol delivery were good when, in a few days, another warlike demonstration against Riel took place most inopportunately. This movement started up the Assiniboine River at Portage la Prairie, High Bluff, Poplar Point, White Horse Plains and Headingly, and a body of less than a hundred men, poorly enough armed, started on the march, to rendezvous at Kildonan, with the intention of enlisting the settlers along the Red River in the movement. At the head of this movement was Captain Boulton, an officer of the 100th Regiment, who is said to have advised strongly against it, but who took command when hot-headed men insisted on going. The occasion of this rising was the delay in releasing the rest of the prisoners, and a certain amount of resentment against the idea of being under Riel's provisional government. On the way down to the rendezvous several houses of Riel's friends

were searched for the rebel leader, and though some said they intended to secure him as a hostage, others openly declared that they would make short work of him. When this was reported to Riel by his friends he got into a violent rage. Many of his men had left the fort for their homes, but runners were quickly sent out, and until the counter-movements ceased Fort Garry was garrisoned by six or seven hundred well-armed men—a force so great as to render attack by their poorly-armed opponents on the stone-walled and artilleried redoubt utterly futile. Nevertheless, the body of men above referred to came on to Kildonan, where the most of them bivouacked in the historic church and school. I remember well when they arrived at the school, the morning of, I think, the 14th of February. The younger fry amongst us thought the whole thing a splendid idea, on the same principle that actuated the boy who fiercely rejoiced at the burning of his school because he did not know the geography lesson.

To the older people, doubtless, the situation was much more serious, and large numbers of men, not only from Kildonan, but also from St. Paul's, St. Andrew's and St. Peter's, gathered together to discuss it. The consensus of opinion amongst them seems to have been that any movement of the kind contemplated would not only be futile, for the reasons above given,

and likely to end in a useless shedding of blood, but that it was also inopportune, inasmuch as the species of union effected between the opposing parties by the convention just held would be the most certain means of preserving peace until the Dominion Government, with whom the delegates from that convention were treating, would take the whole matter in hand. In the meantime, those assembled at the rendezvous received every hospitality from the people of Kildonan, who entertained as many as they could in their homes, and provided food for those quartered in the church and school.

On the second day after their arrival a fatality, which had a sobering effect, occurred. A French half-breed, Parisien, a rather wild, half-witted fellow, had been arrested at the rendezvous on suspicion of being a spy of Riel; but on the day following his arrest he eluded his guard, snatched a gun from a sleigh, and rushed down the river bank. Here he met, on horseback, a young Kildonan man, son of Mr. John Sutherland, above-named; and, probably with the desire to get the horse, Parisien shot young Sutherland, who was carried into the home of our old minister, and died there in a few hours. The horse, with blood-stained saddle, carried the tale of the tragedy to the parents of the murdered man; while the spy, narrowly escaping lynching, lingered on, to die from natural causes a few months later. This

deplorable event revealed what sorrow might be brought upon many homes by continued strife without any adequate cause or commensurate results.

Some messages then passed between Riel and the assembled force. There was much haziness, but it seemed to be understood that the latter had liberty to return to their homes without any let or hindrance, and that the prisoners still held would be released. Accordingly, those gathered at Kildonan dispersed quietly to different parts of the parishes northward, but those from up the Assiniboine, who had begun the movement, did not fare so well. I have heard it said that Riel was angered at their exhibiting distrust of his word by making a detour to avoid passing Fort Garry, instead of going home by the usual travelled highway, but I think the story extremely improbable. It is more likely that he was enraged because some of those in the party were for the second time engaged in effort against him, and because, as referred to above, he had a lively idea of what might have befallen him had he been found by them on the way to the rendezvous. Whatever the reason may have been, the upshot was that as this handful of men were making their way to their homes across the deep snow of the prairie, they were intercepted by a large force of Riel's men, mounted and well armed. No resistance was made, as it was represented to

them that Riel wished to see them at the fort, and they never dreamed of imprisonment. In any case, neither in numbers nor equipment, would they have been any match for the rebels; but, from personal acquaintance with many of those men, I feel sure that if they had known the indignities they were all to suffer, and if they could have seen the causeless and cruel murder of one of their number, they would have made then and there a last desperate stand against the enemy. As it was they went quietly to the fort, where, to their surprise, they were "thrust into the inner prison," and several of them—Boulton, Scott, Powers, McLeod, Alexander and George Parker—were specially singled out and the sentence of death by shooting suspended over their heads.

About this time Riel was especially desirous of securing the endorsement of his provisional government by the English-speaking settlers, and he promised to spare the lives of these prisoners if all the settlement would fall into line and send representatives to the "parliament" which he was calling in order to pass some legislation. At the request of Commissioner Smith and the ministers of the various churches, the settlers agreed to do this; and this action on their part probably prevented a series of murders by the dictator. In regard to Boulton, who was especially obnoxious to Riel as the leader of the movement against him, the dictator



said he would not yield, and it was decided that the Captain should be shot on the 19th of February; and so he no doubt would have been but for the intercession of Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland, whose son had been recently shot, and who had gone up to plead for the condemned man. Riel had his tender moments, and he finally said to the mother, "Boulton deserves to die; but I will give you his life for the life of the son you have lost through these troubles."

Still the clouds had not all lifted. Riel's "parliament" met on the 26th of February, and to this, in the interests of peace, the English-speaking settlers, true to the promises they had made Commissioner Smith, sent representatives, who began forthwith to enact such legislation as the requirements of the time demanded; but there was withal a sullen feeling of unrest in the country, and a growing, even though unexpressed, discontent with the continued dominance and arbitrary methods of the so-called President, who played fast and loose with pledges and had such utterly un-British views as to the liberty of the subject. Doubtless Riel felt this atmosphere and tried a desperate remedy to change it, when, on the 4th of March, he caused the wanton murder of Thomas Scott, one of the prisoners.

Scott was a young Ontario lad, who had come up to work on the Dawson Route from

the Lake of the Woods to the Red River. He was sinewy, strong, and somewhat indisposed, as most men of Irish extraction are, to be trodden upon, but not given to unprovoked offending. In fact, a friend of mine, who was with him at Kildonan, says Scott could stand a lot of practical joking at the hands of his friends; but in their cold quarters in Fort Garry the prisoners used to keep themselves warm by wrestling and sparring. Scott is said to have taken a few rounds out of the guards, and Riel treated this as contempt of his high authority; and so a kind of trial was held, although no charges were specified, and Scott—who was not given any chance for defence, either in person or by counsel—was sentenced to be shot. Commissioner Smith, the Rev. George Young, and others did their utmost to save him; but Riel was violent, and so the sentence was carried out by a half-drunken firing-party before people generally knew that such a crime was contemplated. The Rev. George Young stayed with the young man to the last; and, as they walked together across the snow on that fateful 4th of March, Scott said to his spiritual adviser, "This is cold-blooded murder"; and so it was. After the execution Mr. Young asked for the body for burial, but Riel refused, and said it would be buried within the fort as a warning to others. The coffin was buried there, but in reality the body, weighted

with chains, was put through a hole in the ice into the river, as I learned in later years from one who was there when it was done.

This horrible execution of one who was only an offender by reason of his loyalty to British principles had an effect directly opposite to that which Riel had expected it to produce. No means of putting an end to his lease of power were available, and as the best method, in their judgment, of keeping a madman quiet, people remained passive; but the sympathy of the English-speaking element was completely estranged, and some there were who told the dictator to his face that his position was that of a usurper, and would not long be maintained. Of this latter number was my father, as I recall from an incident that took place on the Queen's birthday, 1870. On the 20th of May, as appears from the files of the *New Nation*, he, with one or two others, was appointed by the provisional government a magistrate for the Fort Garry District. On May 24th the Queen's birthday was celebrated near Fort Garry with the usual sports, though it had been extensively reported that Riel was to seize the horses brought there for the races that he might have the best mounts for his cavalry. In the afternoon of that day I remember standing with my father on the roadside (now Main Street, Winnipeg) opposite the post-office, then kept by Mr. Bannatyne. It was quite customary in

those days of limited correspondence and primitive postal facilities for the postmaster or his assistant to go out with a letter after anyone to whom it was addressed, as otherwise it might remain there uncalled for during many days. On this occasion Mr. Dan. Devlin, the assistant, seeing my father across the road, came over and handed him a large official envelope, which had been recently dropped in the office. My father opened it, read the contents, and said to me, "We will go up to the fort." The envelope contained his commission from the provisional government as magistrate. He said little to me about it, as I was of but few years at the time; but I remember that, as we drove in through the gateway of Fort Garry, the guards were very polite to him, and one was detailed to hold his horse. My father went straight to the council-room, where Riel was found, and laid the commission down before the President.

"What is wrong with that?" asked Riel. "Isn't it properly signed and sealed? It is intended for you."

"I suppose it is properly signed," said my father, "but I do not wish to keep it. The fact is, Mr. Riel, I do not recognize your government as having any right or authority to make appointments like this. I am already a justice of the peace by the Queen's appointment through the Hudson's Bay Company, and so

do not desire to keep this document, which has to me no value."

Riel seemed rather nettled, but brushed the paper aside with a "Very well, please yourself!" and then began to talk on other matters. Amongst other things, he said: "We had a council meeting last night, and were talking about the soldiers who are coming from Canada. Poor fellows; they will have a hard time of it. We are thinking of sending snowshoes to meet them." To this my father replied that he did not think the soldiers would need the snowshoes, as they would be into the Red River country before some people expected. This did not make matters any better, and the leave-taking was rather ceremonious than cordial; but I remember that the guards were very civil, and in a kindly way turned the horse and led him through the gates that we might drive away.

However, the prisoners were now all released, and the summer wore away without any special incident, the settlers going on with their usual farm work, while all the time looking for the arrival of the troops which were being sent overland on foot, and by canoe, all the way from Eastern Canada, under that gallant soldier Colonel (later Field-Marshal Sir Garnet) Wolseley. A rather dark chapter of our western history was drawing to a close. The winter was overpast and the summer had come, in more senses than one.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *CRITICAL READJUSTMENT.*

THE Canadian Government up to this time had not covered itself with glory by its dealing with the Western question. As we have already mentioned, a good deal of allowance has to be made on account of distance and the absence of swift communication; but even after we have done this we are compelled to admit that public men of both parties sinned grievously through avoidable ignorance; but the murder of Thomas Scott at Fort Garry was a tangible fact that everyone could understand. It rang through Eastern Canada like an alarum bell, and it accelerated the movement for the despatch of troops to the Red River. By May, Colonel Wolseley had the expeditionary force well in hand for the long trip by the Lake Superior route. The force consisted of the 60th Rifles, Artillery and Engineers (regular army), and a battalion each from Ontario and Quebec, although, as a matter of fact, the Quebec battalion had to be made up considerably from the overplus of men who volunteered from Ontario. It was a long, long way from Collingwood, the eastern point of departure, to Fort Garry, and the privilege of going through

the American canal at Sault Ste. Marie was denied to our men. Portages had to be travelled over under heavy loads, rivers had to be spanned, roads had to be made passable, and in the hot summer, through the wilderness, the plague of mosquitoes and other insects had to be encountered. The men, no doubt, availed themselves of the privilege of growling a little, but they turned their growls into songs and let them pass in music out of sight, as in the famous campfire composition with the rousing chorus, "Jolly Boys":

'Twas only as a volunteer  
That I left my abode;  
I never thought of coming here  
To work upon the road.

But Canadian lads then, as now, fight their way through anything that besets their path; and so, by the month of August, the boys had crossed the six hundred miles of wilderness, and appeared strong and lean and brown on the historic banks of the Red River.

When Wolseley once struck the country, experienced soldier as he was, he was in the enemies' land and took no chances. He camped near Kildonan, on the way to Fort Garry, and I remember that a lot of the settlers went down to see the camp; but once they got within the picket lines they stayed there, to their surprise, all night. Knowing nothing of military rules, they were rather incensed that they seemed to

be doubted, and old Sandy Sutherland, whom I remember as a passionate loyalist, asked to be taken to Wolseley, and assured him, with tremendous emphasis, that he was as loyal a man as the Colonel himself. I recollect the day as one of drenching rain when, partly by boats on the river and partly by land, as mounted scouts, the regulars proceeded to the rebel stronghold. A good many settlers went along to see the clash-at-arms, but they were disappointed. Riel's men had melted away before the approach of the soldiery. They had simply scattered to their homes along the rivers, or had folded their tents and gone out towards the Saskatchewan, where dwelt many of their kin. Riel, who was never a fighting man himself, along with his Adjutant-General, Ambroise Lepine, and Mr. M. B. O'Donaghue, who was in some respects the real villain of the whole play, rode out on horseback from the scenes of their departed glory, in good time to cross the river, from whose opposite bank, among the trees, they witnessed Wolseley's triumphal entry. Then they took their way, by trails they knew well, over the boundary line, to await developments.

Colonel Wolseley very wisely concluded that, in the unsettled state of the country, an interregnum would be very inadvisable and even dangerous to law and order; but he, with equal wisdom, declined to establish a military



dictatorship. The new Lieutenant-Governor, the Honorable Adams George Archibald, had not yet arrived in the country; the Riel provisional government had vanished; and Wolseley, deeming that the Hudson's Bay *regime* had not yet been legally superseded, called on Mr. Donald A. Smith, as an official of that Company, to assume authority in the meantime. This Mr. Smith did, and summoned the old Council of Assiniboia to meet again and administer law until the arrival of Mr. Archibald, which took place on the 2nd of September, 1870. Colonel Wolseley, with the regulars, then returned East, leaving the Governor in charge, supported by the battalions from Ontario and Quebec, under command of Colonel Jarvis.

It was well for the rebel leaders that they had vanished from the scene. Possibly ninety per cent. of the volunteers from the East had enlisted to avenge the death of Thomas Scott, and had Riel, Lepine and O'Donaghue been within reach, it is highly probable that in the heat of the hour a lynching would have taken place, than which there are few things more abhorrent to British tradition.

But the time was one of great unsettlement. The soldiers, released from the struggle of the half-military, half-voyageur life they had led for the past few months, were more or less disposed to take advantage of any opportunities that offered themselves for the somewhat

fast and furious pace allowed by the codeless life of a frontier; and as they looked with some bitterness upon the half-breed population, as on those whose compatriots had imprisoned many and murdered one of their countrymen, conflicts more or less sharp were not infrequent on the streets of the straggling village. For instance, on September 13th, a half-breed, Elzear Goulet, generally reputed to be the man who shot Scott with his revolver after he had fallen before the firing-party, ventured into Winnipeg, was recognized by one who had been a prisoner in Fort Garry, and pointed out to some soldiers, who gave chase along with him. Goulet made for the river to swim over to St. Boniface, but was drowned about the spot where he had put Scott's body through the ice into the swirling stream. As there was no coroner, Governor Archibald ordered an investigation before two magistrates, my father, Robert MacBeth, and Solomon Hamelin. They heard the evidence, and had no difficulty in fixing the responsibility. They made their report accordingly to Governor Archibald, but he judged that feeling was running so high between the English and the French that an arrest just then would precipitate a sort of civil war. So the arrest was postponed, and never took place. Many looked on the death of Goulet in that place as a kind of just retribution. In another case, a famous pitched battle

took place between the big drummer of the Ontario regiment and a colossal half-breed, noted for his great strength, but whose lack of skill in the "manly art" left him vanquished before the newcomer.

For the maintenance of law and order, a police force of mounted men was organized, under the chiefship of Captain Villiers, a handsome but somewhat dissipated officer, who did good service for the time. As this book aims at giving a history of foundations, and as many of the members of this force became prominent later on, we give the list in full: W. F. Alloway, James Cross, William Montgomery, Timothy Carroll, Edwin Doidge, Elijah Ketts, George Kerr, John Melanson, John Stevenson, Leon Hivet, George Nicol, H. Montgomery, Robert Power, Maxime Villebrun, W. Miller, John Paterson, Andrew Persy, Neil McCarthy, Michael Fox. These policemen had no sinecure, as may easily be imagined when the condition of things is considered.

It may be as well to say here that the question of what to do in regard to the rebel leaders was one which both political parties at the time felt was the hot end of a poker, which it was discreet not to grasp. Like the boy in Abraham Lincoln's story, they were quite willing to look the other way while the raccoon gnawed the rope and got clear away, because he was an awkward customer to take into camp. No

particular effort was made to get hold of these rebel chiefs, who went across the line for a while and then travelled backwards and forwards, without being molested by the authorities, for some time. Governor Archibald seems to have been under apprehension that any attempt to get these men would lead to a repetition of the rebellion, a matter in which he was very much mistaken.

The whole question of amnesty for the rebel triumvirate was up from the outset. Bishop Tachè, of St. Boniface, who had been in Rome all winter, his absence being one of the regrettable facts of the rebellion time, had returned to the Red River, claiming to have authority from the Canadian Government to proclaim a general amnesty for all who had been implicated in the rebellion. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of this well-known and highly-esteemed prelate; but it is interesting to recall that so eminent and so experienced a statesman and diplomat as Lord Dufferin, when he went fully into the case later, reported that Bishop Tachè had no valid ground to infer that the Canadian Government had promised a general amnesty, which they denied having ever done. It seems that the Bishop, who, no doubt, had earnest desires to secure an amnesty, in the expectation that it would quiet everything down, had received a letter from Sir John A. Macdonald, dated February 16th, 1870, in

which this section occurs: "Should the question arise as to the consumption of stores or goods belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company by the insurgents, you are authorized to inform the leaders that if the Company's Government is restored, not only will there be a general amnesty granted, but in case the Company should claim the payment for such stores, that the Canadian Government will stand between the insurgents and all harm." Several points are to be noted here. First, this letter was written before the murder of Scott, which was the real gravamen of the rebel offence, took place. Second, it was conditional on the restoration of the Hudson's Bay Government and the consequent dispersion of the rebels when that restoration was effected; and third, as Lord Dufferin points out, "it would seem impossible to expand the permission thus conveyed to the Bishop by Sir John, to promise the rebels protection from the monetary demands of the Hudson's Bay Company, into an authority to condone such a savage murder as that of Scott's." And so, as no amnesty was forthcoming, and feeling ran high, it was well for the rebel leaders themselves that they were out of the way; and for the authorities it was no doubt true, as Governor Archibald said, in a letter to Sir George E. Cartier the day after Archibald's arrival at Fort Garry, "It is perhaps the best solution of the question that these

men have taken to flight." Warrants were issued for their arrest, but no one was showing any special enthusiasm to effect their apprehension, and so they kept under cover; but we shall meet them and the amnesty question later on in the story.

In the meantime, Governor Archibald set about getting Canadian machinery into operation as rapidly as possible, for things were in considerable confusion. As authorized by the Secretary of State, he chose two men, one English and one French, as an Executive Council, to help him in his duties. Alfred Boyd, a highly respected merchant, represented the English, and Marc Amable Girard (afterward Senator), the French. Both were comparative newcomers, but perhaps safer on that account, because they had no previous entanglements. It was desired to secure a Legislature, and so an enumeration was hastily taken. The new province was named Manitoba, after the lake bearing that name, the root being two Indian words meaning "the narrows or straits of the Great Spirit." Usage has placed the accent on the third syllable, but it should properly be placed on the last.

As "first things" are always of interest in later days, it might be well to say that the census in 1870 showed a population of 11,963 in the new province—of whom 1,565 were whites, 578 Indians, 5,757 French half-breeds,

## *Critical Readjustment*

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and 4,083 English half-breeds. There were 6,247 Catholics, 5,716 Protestants, and the nationalities of the whites were as follows: 747 born in the North-West, 294 in eastern Canada, 69 in the United States, 125 in England, 240 in Scotland, 47 in Ireland, 15 in France, and 28 in other countries. The first local election was held on the 30th December, 1870, and the following is a list of the members elected to the first Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba, with the constituencies they represented:

<i>Baie St. Paul</i> .....	Joseph Dubuc.
<i>Headingley</i> .....	John Taylor.
<i>High Bluff</i> .....	John Norquay.
<i>Kildonan</i> .....	John Sutherland.
<i>Lake Manitoba</i> .....	Angus McKay.
<i>Poplar Point</i> .....	David Spence.
<i>Portage la Prairie</i> .....	F. Bird.
<i>St. Agathe</i> .....	George Klyne.
<i>St. Andrew's North</i> .....	Alfred Boyd.
<i>St. Andrew's South</i> .....	E. H. G. G. Hay.
<i>St. Anne</i> .....	J. H. McTavish.
<i>St. Boniface East</i> .....	M. A. Girard.
<i>St. Boniface West</i> .....	Louis Schmidt.
<i>St. Charles</i> .....	Henry J. Clarke.
<i>St. Clement's</i> .....	Thomas Bunn.
<i>St. Francois Xavier East</i> ...	Pascal Breland.
<i>St. Francois Xavier West</i> ...	Joseph Royal.
<i>St. James'</i> .....	E. Burke.
<i>St. Norbert North</i> .....	Joseph Lemay.
<i>St. Norbert South</i> .....	Pierre Delorme.
<i>St. Paul's</i> .....	Dr. C. J. Bird.
<i>S. Peter's</i> .....	Thomas Howard.
<i>St. Vital</i> .....	A. Beauchemin.
<i>Winnipeg</i> .....	Donald A. Smith.

## *The Romance of Western Canada*

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The first regularly constituted Government consisted of the following members:

Hon. Henry J. Clarke, Q.C., Attorney-General.

Hon. Marc Amable Girard, Treasurer.

Hon. Thomas Howard, Secretary.

Hon. Alfred Boyd, Public Works and Agriculture.

Hon. James McKay, without portfolio.

The political meetings of the period were stormy enough. Party politics did not develop much for some years, and the questions discussed, being largely of a local character, were all the more bitter because, as Mr. Goldwin Smith used to say, cynically, "the smaller the pit the fiercer the rats." Rebellion echoes were heard at all the meetings, like the Civil War issues in United States politics, and riots and free fights were by no means rare. In fact, the organizers generally got ready beforehand for such an emergency. Almost every aspirant for political leadership was accompanied on his stumping tours by a "bully," with such help as he could gather, and I remember once seeing a meeting pass off peaceably, owing to the presence of the before-mentioned big drummer on the one side and an equally redoubtable champion on the other, each fearing to provoke active hostilities.

These meetings were not without their humorous side, and oftentimes somewhat peculiar



situations arose out of the unfamiliarity of the settlers with the methods and expressions of parliamentary debate. I recollect once when a school-teacher had framed a motion and made a speech as to the leniency with which we should view those who, as mere *dupes*, had been drawn into the rebellion, that the reporter gave out that he had made a motion as to the *brutes* who had gone into the rebellion. The chagrin of the school-teacher may be imagined. I also recall seeing a man who had occupied the chair during a meeting leaving it in high dudgeon on a motion to vacate, which he was not aware was made preparatory to moving him a vote of thanks. On another occasion one embryo statesman, who was holding before his audience the hope of some change in governmental methods, and who sought to clinch his speech by the use of a proverb, got the two sayings, "Every dog has his day" and "It's a long lane that has no turning" slightly mixed, and vehemently assured the people that "It was a long dog that had no turning."

The voting was all done openly, and hence it was not surprising that in the older settled districts an election threw apples of discord into regions where formerly the inhabitants had lived in peace and quietness, while the ties which frequently occurred during the polling-day sent the pulse of the community up to fever pitch. Canvassing was of the most personal

kind, and as we then had no legislation in regard to corrupt practices to reveal the sin, it was considered a sign of meanness on the part of a candidate not to provide a somewhat elaborate meal at every committee meeting, and ample refreshments in some house near the polling-place on election day. Riots were not altogether unknown, and at the first election in Winnipeg wagon-spokes were freely used, the chief of police was rendered *hors de combat*, a printing office was wrecked, and finally the military had to be called out to overawe the noisy multitude.

When the first Legislature met, it could not reasonably be expected that the same dignity and decorum, the same acquaintance with parliamentary methods or the same breadth of statesmanship would be manifested as in older lands. The appearance of the early House was peculiar and characteristic of a transition stage. I recall seeing, in the old legislative chamber, men clothed in the faultless Prince Albert black beside men in a curious compound of the old and the new, having the long curled hair of raven hue, wearing the moccasins to which they had always been accustomed and which certainly had the advantage of silence over creaky boots; coats open, displaying the colored flannel shirt without a collar, and across the waist, picturesquely slashed, the French belt or sash commonly worn on the prairies. The literary

education of some of these men had been of the scantiest, and when one day a member sent a note across the floor, asking a member of the Government to move the House into a "committy of the hole," it was taken jocularly as a deep-laid plot to entrap the Executive unawares. In a case under my own observation a newly-elected member, whose sudden elevation had induced the too free use of stimulants, was making himself so obnoxious that he had to be sharply called to order by the Speaker with threats of expulsion from the precincts. The member, unabashed, told the Speaker, in effect, that he ought to remember the primitive condition of things in the country; and, desiring to impress the Speaker with the fact that though he (the member) was not a finished statesman, he was fairly representative of, if not superior to, his constituents in attainments, said: "You may think I am a fool, Mr. Speaker, but I am not such a fool as the people who sent me here"; in which saying the member builded better than he knew, and aptly described what has been witnessed frequently enough in political life.

I remember nearly all these men in a personal way, and would fain write a paragraph on each but for limitations of space; but even a few lines may be of interest. Of the members of that first Manitoba Legislature, Mr. Donald A. Smith (Strathcona), who had to

dodge wagon-spokes and other missiles on the day of the election, became the most widely known; Joseph Dubuc, an upright, lovable man, became a highly respected judge; Angus McKay, the handsomest member, retired into an Indian agency. John Sutherland, "the old Kildonan warhorse," one of the most honest and sincere men to be found anywhere, and E. H. G. G. Hay (called "Alphabetical Hay" on account of his numerous initials), were champions of the people. These two fought strenuously for one public school system in the first session, and thought they had succeeded, until they discovered they had been working in surroundings like the fence-rails of Kentucky, which are so crooked that a pig crawls through and comes out on the same side. McTavish was a Hudson's Bay man, who became Land Commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but who undermined his strength by too genial a life; Louis Schmidt, more or less a nonentity, had been Riel's secretary; Pascal Breland, one of the noble type of old plainmen; Joseph Royal, an able lawyer, afterwards Governor of the North-West Territories; Joseph Lemay, of great avoirdupois, whose skill as a caricaturist kept his fellow-members humble; Thomas Howard, the Beau Brummell of the House, whose graceful manners were more distinctive than his ability; and then there was that quite remarkable man, John Norquay,

who made his influence felt far beyond provincial bounds. He was what was called a Scotch half-breed, uniting in himself the strain of the Orkneys with a mixture of Indian blood, which he was always proud to own. He was educated wholly at the Anglican school and college at St. John's, through the benevolence of the Church, became a school-teacher in early life, and at the first local election became a member of the local Legislature, and so remained till his death in 1891. For some seventeen years he was a member of the Government, and during a good part of that time he was First Minister of his native province. Physically, he was a man of tremendous size and strength, standing some six feet three in height, and broad and strong in proportion. As an indication of his physique, I recall seeing him at a political meeting, when a fight was imminent, thrust himself between the combatants, who found themselves as much apart as if a rock had dropped between them. He must have been a diligent student to secure the complete mastery of English he manifested in his public addresses, as well as the thorough acquaintance with public questions that gave his speeches authority. As a speaker he was at his best. He had a voice of clear and resonant force, and a fluency which carried everything before it without degenerating into wordiness, while his vocabulary was that of one who had gained it by wide reading and keen study. I

heard him speak on almost every kind of theme, on a great variety of platforms, and never knew him to disappoint the expectations of his listeners. Wherever he spoke in the native parishes he would naturally have a specially sympathetic audience; but, as an example of his influence on other audiences, I remember hearing him speak with great effect in an immense hall in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the occasion of a concert given there during an ice carnival by the St. George's Snowshoe Club, of Winnipeg. He was on his way home from Ottawa to Winnipeg when we secured him at St. Paul, knowing that his presence would redeem our concert from possible failure. The gathering of several thousands was representative of many parts of the United States, that nation of public speakers, and they looked with somewhat critical gaze upon our burly Premier when he was introduced as an extra on the programme. He had no special text given him, but dwelt chiefly on the friendly relations and close connection which had always subsisted between the Red River colonists and the Western States, whence he passed to wider questions of international fellowship, evoking rounds of applause by the rolling periods of his eloquence.

The first session of the Legislature was held in the house purchased from Mr. A. G. B. Banatyne, near the Main Street centre of present-day Winnipeg. Joseph Royal was the Speaker

of the House, and Henry J. Clarke was Premier. Clarke was a man of marked ability, a good lawyer and a brilliant orator, who did Manitoba good service in the beginning, but who, by invading the sanctity of another man's home, eliminated himself from public life when he was only on the threshold of what might have been a distinguished career.

Proceedings were conducted in the Legislature, the courts, etc., in both English and French for many years, and one of the most impassioned and eloquent speeches of the time was made by a Frenchman on behalf of retaining his mother tongue in public and official use; albeit that same speech was made in English, and the absurdity of wasting time and money in using two languages in a British country, where all who took an intelligent interest in affairs spoke English, soon became apparent. Moreover, it was found that while the appropriation was duly made, there were cases in which the French printing of the proceedings was not done for years after the sessions of the House. There was, too, a somewhat ridiculous side to the matter. Speeches from the throne were always read in both languages. Some of the governors could read in both; others, who only read English, had the good sense to hand the speech for reading to the French clerk; but when English-speaking governors, for fear of shattering the Constitution,

persisted in reading the French speech with English pronunciation, the effect was so distressing that the French themselves were doubtless glad when their beautiful language could no longer be mangled so heartlessly before the public.

Changes other than the abolition of the dual language system were also made at an early date. "Dualities" have had a hard time in the West, for, shortly after the beginning of our history, dual representation in local and Dominion Houses had to succumb. Next in order the "Upper House" was forced to go.

The Legislative Council (as our "Upper House" was called) had come into existence on the 10th March, 1871, and was composed of the following gentlemen appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council: Hons. Donald Gunn, Francois Dauphinais, Solomon Hamelin, Colin Inkster, Dr. J. H. O'Donnell, Francis Ogletree and James McKay, the latter being Speaker of the House. This institution, intended, I suppose, as "a check on hasty legislation," was not easily annihilated, for the members, in full enjoyment of its titles and emoluments, were not likely to approve any bill for their own decapitation; but after some new appointments this "fifth wheel" to the provincial coach lapsed out of existence.

On the 16th of May, 1871, the first General Quarterly Court, since the Hudson's Bay



Company days, was held, Judge (afterwards Sir Francis) Johnson presiding, Mr. John (afterwards Senator) Sutherland being Sheriff and Mr. Thomas Bunn, Clerk of the Court.

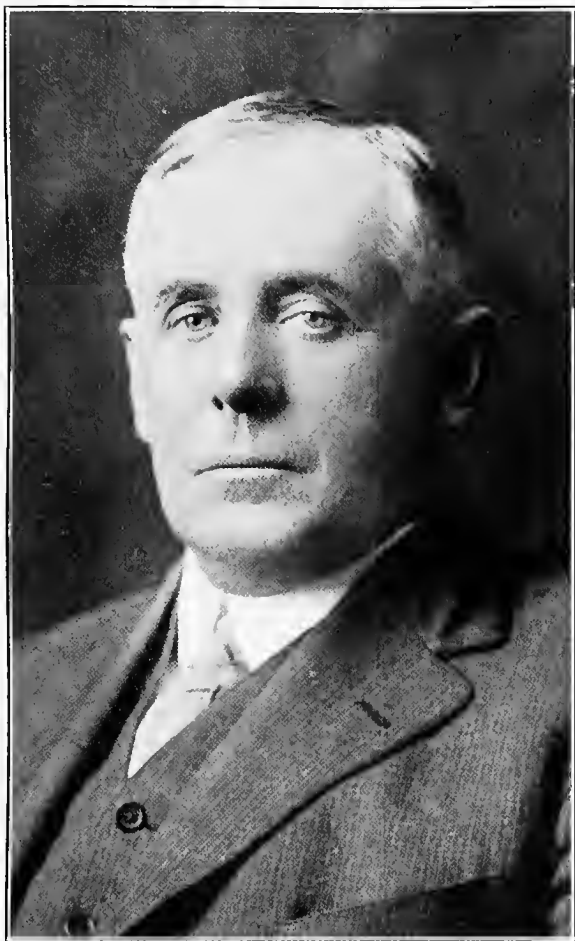
On the 1st day of July, 1871, Dominion Day was celebrated in royal style, and so the great North-West was off to a good start in Confederation; and the North-West in those days meant not only the little "postage stamp" Province of Manitoba, but the whole vast prairie area to the mountains, although Manitoba was the only part then organized, mainly because, west of Fort Garry to the Rockies at that time, there was practically no settled population. British Columbia comes later in the story. It will be remembered that it was not included in the original charter to Prince Rupert and his associates, seeing that its rivers did not drain into Hudson Bay.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *MANITOBA IN THE MAKING.*

THE Province of Manitoba, with its immense hinterland towards the Rockies, had now fairly entered into the Dominion, beginning to make its contribution to the general welfare as the youngest sister in Confederation; but there was considerable distance to be travelled, and a good many things to be done before the West would get into the heart of things. Distances were great and means of coming into contact with the East were primitive enough.

From the earliest times the question of communication with the outside world had been a burning problem. The first settlers, who had begun their isolation by failing to hear of Waterloo for long months after that famous battle took place, had become more or less reconciled to living "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." These pioneers grew content with the bi-annual trip to York Factory for merchandise and mail, and with the commerce and communication that percolated through the western States. They were not quite so solitary as the Hudson's Bay Company's officer at a remote point, who received his copies of the *London Times* once a year



HON. T. C. NORRIS  
Premier of Manitoba.



with the annual packet, and who began always at the farthest back number and read right through to get abreast of events, though even then he left off about a year behind. But while the condition of the first settlers was, soon after their arrival, a little better than his, it was not wholly satisfactory to the growing colony on the Red River, and especially was it unsatisfactory to those who in the sixties began to come more rapidly into the settlement. Hence, as soon as the rebellion had quieted down, people began to look around for inlets for population and merchandise and outlets for produce. The old steamboat, flat-bottomed and stern-wheeled, was one of the prized institutions of the time. Introduced by the irrepressibly energetic and shrewd J. J. Hill, it ran from near the "head waters" in the western States down the Red River to Fort Garry, and on rare occasions down past the lower settlement to Lower Fort Garry. These latter occasions were red-letter days for the community: schools were dismissed while the boat was passing, and grown-up people gathered on the banks, greeting her with shotgun salutes, and eliciting responses from the boat whistle, to the half-terror, half-delight of the children. When merchants began to open stores in some numbers on the present site of Winnipeg, the advent of "the first boat" after the long winter was the goal to which the hopes and the longings

of people most turned. The merchant of to-day who has "just sold out," but assures the customer that he has some of the desired goods "on the way," is distinctly of the same genus as the ancient and veracious merchants of Winnipeg, who invariably asserted concerning everything that they did not have on hand, that "it would be in on the first boat." Some mathematical genius, who perhaps desired to keep his mind engaged in arithmetical gymnastics during the long winter, made much inquiry for goods, keeping note of the stereotyped reply, and towards spring gave in miles what he considered the dimensions of "the first boat" would be if the promises of the merchants had any tangible foundation.

One of the first indications we had of swifter communication with the outside world was the erection of telegraph poles and lines across our farms in the early seventies. The proceedings were more or less shrouded with that mystery and occultness which provokes the inquiry of boys; and, like the man who, seeing the electric light for the first time, wondered "how they could get such light from a hairpin in a bottle," we used to wonder how men sent messages on those wires twisted around a "bottle" at intervals. We tried to examine as far as possible, and although warned as to the danger of meddling with the strange machinery, some boy of sure eye and hand would knock one of

the "bottles" off occasionally; but it refused to yield up the secret of telegraphy, and, replacing it, we would take our seats upon the fence and watch whether any of the daring birds that took their places on the wires would be "shot" by the passing telegrams.

But things were moving apace, and on the 20th November, 1871, the telegraph line was linked up at the Pembina boundary line with the American system, and so we were at last within touch of eastern Canada by wire. On that red-letter day the following despatch was sent by Governor Archibald to Ottawa:

"FORT GARRY,

" November 20th, 1871.

" *To Right Honorable Lord Lisgar,*

" *Governor-General of Canada.*

"The first telegraphic message from the heart of the continent may appropriately convey, on the part of our people, an expression of devout thankfulness to Almighty God for the close of our isolation from the rest of the world. This message announces that close, as its receipt by your Excellency will attest it. The voice of Manitoba, collected this morning on the banks of the Assiniboine, will be heard in a few hours on the banks of the Ottawa; and we may hope, before the day closes, that the words of your Excellency's reply, spoken at the capital of the Dominion, will be listened to at Fort Garry. We may now count in hours the work that used to occupy weeks. I congratulate your

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Excellency on the facility so afforded in discharge of your high duties, so far as they concern this province. I know I can better discharge my own when, at any moment, I may appeal to your Lordship for advice and assistance.

“(Signed) ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD.”

And the answer duly came back as follows :

“*To Lieutenant-Governor Archibald,*

“*Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

“I received your message with great satisfaction. The completion of the line to Fort Garry is an auspicious event. It forms a fresh and most important link between the eastern Provinces and the North-West, and is a happy augury for the future, inasmuch as it gives proof of the energy with which the Union, wisely effected, of Her Majesty's North American possessions enables progress and civilization to be advanced in different and far distant portions of the Dominion. I congratulate the inhabitants of Manitoba on the event, and join heartily in your thanksgiving.

“(Signed) LISGAR.”

And so the West was getting ahead, but there were some jolts. In the early fall of 1871, rumors of a Fenian invasion were abroad—an invasion worked up, it was believed, by O'Donaghue, who was living in the States, and was soured over the turn affairs had taken. In any case, he had no love for things British.



"General" O'Neill, the hardy perennial, was also to the fore. Word came to Governor Archibald, who issued his famous "Rally-Round-the-Flag" proclamation, and there was mustering in hot haste. All districts contributed their quota under the stirring appeals of men who were determined that the hostile movement, however extensive it was, should be checked at the border. It was in this connection that John Norquay made one of his first public addresses on a national subject, closing with the words, "We will be unworthy representatives of our forefathers if we allow the invaders to defile our soil with their traitorous feet." But the Fenian raid was halted, through the friendly offices of the American Consul at Winnipeg, Mr. J. W. Taylor. He had learned of the affair some time before, and had asked the Canadian Government if they would make any objection to American soldiers coming across the line, if need be, to arrest the invaders. Receiving a favorable reply, he took the matter up with Washington, with the result that when a body of Fenians crossed over at Pembina, on October 5th, Captain Wheaton, of the U. S. 20th Infantry, followed. After dispersing them, he placed the leaders under arrest and took them back over the border.

This American Consul Taylor, affectionately called "the Consul" by everybody in and around Winnipeg, was a very well-known

figure there for many years; in fact, was not changed, despite changes at Washington, from his appointment till his death. He had been through the western country as early as 1856, and was, on that account, sometimes called "Saskatchewan Taylor." He was amongst the first men to hold that the country west of the 49th parallel would become one of the greatest wheat areas in the world. In that faith he did much to encourage agriculture in that region by importing, in small parcels, seed wheat of many varieties for experiment. My father and he were warm friends, and many a plot of wheat did they lay out together on our old Kildonan homestead, with its practically inexhaustible soil; and the product of some of these plots did much to put the West on its feet as one of the most wonderful wheat countries on this planet. A charming personality, a perfectly-mannered gentleman of the old school, a friend to all children, a lover of flowers, a delightful conversationalist, a vividly-eloquent and impassioned orator, "one that loved his fellow-men," a human-hearted diplomat of the kind that would make war impossible—such was Consul Taylor, loyal to his own land, generous to all. There are thousands all over the West who recall the old days well enough to join in this tribute to the kindly genius, without whose presence no social or literary gathering in the old Red River country was complete.

In connection with this abortive Fenian raid, a curious thing happened which caused a great deal of excitement and considerable ill-feeling against Governor Archibald on the part of the loyalist people. On October 8th, Mr. M. A. Girard and some others came to the Governor and told him that two hundred loyal French half-breeds under Riel and Lepine were in St. Boniface as a mounted corps to offer their services to repel the Fenians. The Governor went over and was received with musketry salute. Then he shook hands with the leaders and thanked them, while Mr. Girard also made a speech in praise of British institutions. The Fenian raid was over three days before this took place, but the Governor presumed they had not heard of that, although these mounted scouts would certainly know what had taken place a few miles away. From his hiding-place in the States, O'Donaghue wrote that these men would have joined the Fenians had they succeeded. Personally, I do not think this to be the case, but the gist of Governor Archibald's offending lay in his shaking hands, while Her Majesty's representative, with men who had committed a crime in the murder of Scott; but for the Governor it ought to be said that he did not know the country, that he seemed to be always in fear that there would be another uprising, and that he ought to make special efforts to placate men who might otherwise do

much harm. Shortly after this, in view of the feeling stirred up, and the fact that a reward had been offered in Ontario for the murderers of Scott, Riel and Lepine left the country for a time. The matter would not rest, however. Men bided their time, and in September, 1873, a warrant was sworn out by Mr. W. A. Farmer before Doctor O'Donnell, in Winnipeg, for the arrest of Riel and Lepine. Riel could not be found; but the two constables went to Lepine's house, and after he had taken a look at them, and said he could crack their heads together, he went along with them. He was tried before Chief Justice E. B. Wood, and was defended by Chapleau, of Quebec, in an exceptionally brilliant effort; but Lepine was found guilty and condemned to death. On many grounds, and especially on the ground that Governor Archibald, representing the Crown, had accepted Lepine's proffered service at the Fenian raid, Lord Dufferin, on his own responsibility, commuted the sentence to two years' imprisonment and permanent forfeiture of political rights. This brought up the whole amnesty question again, and in 1875 the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, in the House of Commons, moved that an amnesty be granted Riel, conditional on five years' banishment from the country. This is how Riel could come back for the second rebellion in 1885 without being liable to arrest; he had been some twelve years away.

Albeit he had also been elected for a Dominion constituency, had signed the roll, but had, of course, never taken the seat.

Meanwhile, Manitoba was experiencing the changes incident on political struggle, although what we generally call party had not yet got a foothold. In 1874 the Clarke Government was defeated, and the Girard Government took office, one of the questions continually to the fore being the obtaining of "better terms" from the Dominion in the way of means to develop the Province, it being strongly felt that, on account of its only having four members in the House of Commons, Manitoba was getting scant provision. Then the Girard Government went down, and was succeeded by the Davis Government, in 1875. Davis was a hotel-keeper, proprietor of the noted "Davis House," the successor of the first hotel in Winnipeg, which was kept by "Dutch George"; but Davis, though a man of shrewdness, left no special mark on the country's life. His main accomplishment was securing as a member of his cabinet John Norquay, who in 1878 succeeded to the premiership.

By degrees railways pushed their way westward, through the States to the boundary line, and the Pembina branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway was built thence to St. Boniface in 1878. The first two spikes in this road were driven in 1877 by the Governor-General

and Lady Dufferin, whose visit to the West in that year marks a new era in the history of the country. They came by way of Toronto, Chicago and St. Paul, taking the last stage of the journey from Fisher's Landing to Fort Garry on the steamer *Minnesota*. They were received with unbounded enthusiasm in the new West, and there, as elsewhere, the tactful Governor-General did much to oil the machinery of Confederation and remove particles likely to cause friction. They had many unique experiences during their tour and their camping out, amongst them being shooting the Grand Rapids above Lake Winnipeg in a York boat, and riding in a Red River cart drawn by thirty garlanded oxen at Stony Mountain. The speech given by Lord Dufferin at a dinner in Winnipeg, before returning east, has always been regarded as one of the best immigration agencies the West has had, and I give the following famous extract:

"From its geographical position and its peculiar characteristics, Manitoba may be regarded as the keystone of that mighty arch of sister provinces which spans the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was here that Canada, emerging from her woods and forests, first gazed upon her rolling prairies and unexplored North-West, and learned, as by an unexpected revelation, that her historical territories of the Canadas, her eastern seaboard of New Brunswick, Labrador and Nova

Scotia, her Laurentian lakes and valleys, lowlands and pastures, though themselves more extensive than half a dozen European kingdoms, were but the vestibules and ante-chambers to that till then undreamed-of Dominion, whose illimitable dimensions confound the arithmetic of the surveyors and the verification of the explorer. It was hence that, counting her past achievements as but the preface and prelude to her future exertions and expanding destinies, she took a new departure, received the afflatus of a more important inspiration, and felt herself no longer a mere settler along the banks of a single river, but the owner of half a continent, and in the magnitude of her possession, in the wealth of her resources, in the sinews of her material might, the peer of any power on earth."

Sir John A. Macdonald had gone out of power in Ottawa, in 1872, in connection with the "Pacific Scandal," and during this decade Premier Alexander Mackenzie was trying to construct a transcontinental line through Canadian territory by utilizing "the magnificent water stretches" along the way. Hence, eastward from Winnipeg, beginnings were made, somewhat to the bewilderment of the old settlers, through whose growing crops the roadway of the iron horse was being pushed. However, Mackenzie, one of the most upright of men, fell upon lean years in a time of world-wide depression, and Macdonald came back to

power, in 1878, on the wings of the "National Policy." The Canadian Pacific Railway was now thrust forward with new energy under a new company. This company received an enormous grant in money and lands; but they faced an undertaking so stupendous that it used to be said that the road would never pay for the axle grease. Several times the whole undertaking was on the verge of failure. It was, perhaps, fortunate that most of the Canadian directorate hailed from the land of the saying, "a stout heart to a stey brae," and few who know the way in which these men pledged their private fortunes and hazarded their business reputations will grudge the joy that must have been theirs when one of the most distinguished of their number, Donald A. Smith, at Craig Ellachie, in 1885, drove the last spike in the band uniting oceans which lave the opposite shores of Canada. In fact, one cannot read the name of the place amidst the great mountain ranges where that notable act was done without thinking of the legends of Highland seers concerning the "grey frontlet of rock" which stood in the glen of Strathspey, and from whose summit the scattered firs and wind-swept heather in war-time whispered to the clansmen, "Stand fast," for only by the most determined steadfastness could men have completed the task of which we have just spoken.

It was for some time quite fashionable to



denounce the rapid construction of the C.P.R. as conducing to the scattering of population westward, and to say that the road should have been built by easy stages, and settlement consolidated in lateral directions. Apart from the fact that such a process would have been oblivious of the conditions upon which British Columbia entered Confederation, there was only a modicum of truth in the assertion that slower construction of the railway would have consolidated settlement, as early settlers who witnessed the movement of population can testify. There seems always to have been a westward moving instinct in humanity, and under its influence men have, from the beginning, been crowding towards the setting sun. In the West, long before a railway was dreamed of, I saw my own kith and kin leave the Red River colony to travel, amidst great difficulty, with cart-trains, five hundred miles north-westward and form a settlement there. Those who were in the country at the time know that during the construction of the C.P.R. emigrants left its trains at the various termini, and, loading their effects on "prairie schooners," pushed on, leaving good land unoccupied to the right hand and to the left.

Following more particularly the history of Manitoba, it is highly interesting to know that three years after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway across the continent, the

Hon. John Norquay, who had held office for some fourteen years, went down to defeat in 1888. Then ensued the brief premiership of Doctor Harrison, after which the Hon. Thomas Greenway took office, with the redoubtable Joseph Martin as Attorney-General; and this is interesting, because Norquay met his defeat mainly through his fight for the rights of his native province to have other railway advantages besides those that came by the grace of the Canadian Pacific, which had a cast-iron monopoly clause in its charter. For fear of strangling the infant transcontinental by premature competition, the Ottawa Government said they would disallow, and they did disallow, any Railway Act passed in Manitoba. Norquay went on and, with the support of the Opposition, enacted the Red River Valley Railway Bill, and there was a great celebration when the first sod was turned with a spade by the big Premier on the 2nd July. Of course it was disallowed in Ottawa. Trouble arose, also, over the transfer of certain bonds of the Province to Mann and Holt, in connection with the Hudson Bay Railway, on the strength of a telegram from Hon. A. A. C. Lariviere, a member of the Norquay Government, that the Ottawa Government would transfer the collateral land grant. This, the Ottawa Government repudiated, saying there was a misunderstanding. Norquay and Lariviere resigned,

Doctor Harrison, a member of the same Government, taking the premiership; but Doctor Harrison's new minister, Mr. Burk, who represented the French element, was beaten hands down at the bye-election by Mr. F. H. Francis, a popular merchant of Headingly. I have talked with many people who took part in that pivotal election, the result of which led to the Manitoba School Question, that changed the political face of all Canada in 1896, and they differ widely as to what occurred. The constituency of St. Francois Xavier, in which Burk was defeated, was really a French constituency. The Harrison party are said to have warned the people that if Greenway and Martin took office they would abolish Separate Schools, and some say that the Greenway party denied this; but Mr. Francis, a quiet, popular man, who spoke French as well as his native English, developed great personal strength during the campaign on his own account. Greenway was as strong against railway disallowance as Norquay, and, taken altogether, Mr. Francis won, and brought the Greenway-Martin party into power. Following the general election, Norquay returned to the House as leader of a mere "corporal's guard" in opposition; but his speech in defence remains as perhaps the loftiest and most impassioned address that the Legislature has ever heard. In that speech he reviewed his long tenure of office, without

claiming infallibility, but showing how, with abundant opportunity for enriching himself, he had surrendered, in comparative poverty, the seals of office, and declaring how he was satisfied in being able to hand down an unsullied name to his children.

Norquay died next year, somewhat suddenly, and the Greenway Government accorded him a state funeral. It is good to remember, now that they have both gone, that the two leaders, who fought so hard in the House and before the country, were warm personal friends, who enjoyed many a quiet hour together. Amid the multitude of floral tributes on Norquay's coffin, there was one which few knew about or understood. It bore the simple inscription, "John, in loving memory, from Tom," and told a silent story of personal friendship between political foes.

Shortly before this, another greatly beloved citizen passed away in the person of Mr. A. G. B. Bannatyne, whose name was prominent in the rebellion records as one who strove incessantly for peace. Connected with every type of benevolent work, Mr. Bannatyne left a goodly record in the city, where his name is commemorated in the street that runs from the old location of his historic homestead.

Greenway and Martin made a strong combination in government—Greenway, reserved, almost stolid, strong, silent and able; Martin,

active, energetic, fiery, but clear-headed, and with a general makeup that earned him the sobriquet "Fighting Joe." Within a few weeks the Greenway-Martin Government secured from Ottawa the cessation of the disallowance policy—something for which Norquay had fought for years in vain. Of course it could be said that the Canadian Pacific Railway had now become strong enough to stand competition; but friends of Norquay never quite forgave the Ottawa authorities for giving to their political opponents what they had withheld from a political, though independent, friend. The result of the cessation of the "disallowance" policy in Ottawa was increased railway facilities in Manitoba and a consequent growth in prosperity. The outstanding thing, of course, in the Greenway-Martin period was the abolition of Separate Schools, and of that we will give some history later. This administration held office a little over ten years, when the Conservatives rallied their forces under the leadership of the popular Hugh John Macdonald. Mr. Macdonald came into power upon a prohibition pledge, and redeemed it by passing the noted Liquor Act through the Legislature, and submitting it for the opinion of the Imperial Privy Council. It was held to be *intra vires* of the Provincial Legislature, and it is known that Mr. Macdonald, had he remained in office, would have brought it into

force by Order-in-Council; but he had in the meantime dropped out of provincial politics to accept the office of Minister of the Interior. Macdonald (now Sir Hugh John, the able magistrate of the Winnipeg Police Court) is the son of "John A.," the first Premier of confederated Canada. "Hugh John," as he is affectionately called, served the country as a soldier under Wolseley and Middleton, but, though immensely popular, has no love for the hurly-burly of political life, and, beyond his premiership in Manitoba and a short term at Ottawa, to both of which he had felt personally pledged, he has resisted all efforts to make him a political leader. His successor in the premiership of Manitoba, Hon. R. P. Roblin, and colleagues took the course of asking the people to vote on the enforcement of the Prohibition Act. This course incensed the temperance people, who largely refrained from voting, and the Act was killed. The Roblin Government defended their action by saying that the former votes favoring prohibition had been on the abstract question, and that they were not prepared to put a concrete Act in force without a popular mandate. But the prohibitionists never forgot what they considered an unfair deal; and so, when a few years ago the Roblin Government came under charges of serious maladministration of provincial funds in connection with the erection of public buildings, the

combination against them was so overwhelming that they were swept utterly from power. They had had their day of opportunity, but their sun went down in storm and cloud.

Premier Norris, a progressive farmer, is now in power, with Mr. Edward Brown, an able financier, in charge of that difficult department. So far the Government has done well. It has abolished the drink traffic, enfranchised women, and carried out some other useful legislation. No Province has greater traditions than the one whose early history was made by the Red River settlers, who consecrated the land by incomparable endeavor to found godly homes and build up the institutions which alone can make a nation great. May the rulers and people always strive to be worthy of the ancient sacrifices.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *THE VAST PRAIRIE SECTION.*

IF real history begins with colonization, then the history of the vast prairie section of Canada, embracing the immense Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, is of comparatively recent date. Over the ground that preceded settlement we have already travelled, when we have been recounting the story of the great fur companies, with their conflicts, their explorations, and their contributions to the sum total of human knowledge. Across these mighty plains they had all passed—hunters, traders, trappers, explorers and the rest—mingling with the majestic Indian tribes and making their wealth out of the countless herds of buffalo that once were chief amongst the wild animals on the prairie; but prior to the date of Confederation, and for a good many years thereafter, there were very few settlements except those that clustered around the early missionary outposts or the frontier forts of the traders. In fact, these wide prairie reaches began to be settled by the overflow from what is now the Province of Manitoba. As far back as 1866 some of my own relatives went far north-westward and founded a



mission, calling the place Prince Albert, on the North Saskatchewan. Around that mission a settlement gradually gathered, and in some degree that same process went on at other points; but there was no general inrush of people until the Canadian Pacific, crossing the Red River in 1881, began to push its way towards the setting sun; and it was only some nine or ten years before that time that even a rudimentary form of government for the huge domain then called the North-West Territories was considered necessary. Before that date the Hudson's Bay Company had been in general control, and the code of the camp and the hunt and the trail was sufficient to meet the situation.

In 1871 the Hon. Donald A. Smith (Strathcona), the member for Selkirk, Manitoba, asked in the House of Commons at Ottawa what provision they intended to make for the government of the North-West Territories. how they were going to regulate trade, and what steps they were likely to take to control the traffic in liquor, which was being carried on by American and other traders to the demoralization of the Indians. Sir George E. Cartier, replying, indicated that practically nothing was done as yet, but that the Canadian Government had power to deal with all these matters. At the session of 1872 an Act was passed by the House to provide for the government of the North-West Territories on the line

of the suggestions made by Captain Butler (later Sir William), who had travelled through the country at the request of the Government. In January, 1873, the first North-West Council was gazetted, to act with the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba in the government of the Territories. The members of this first North-West Council were Hon. M. A. Girard, Hon. Donald A. Smith, Hon. Henry J. Clarke, Hon. Patrice Breland, Hon. Alfred Boyd, Doctor Schultz, Joseph Dubuc, A. G. B. Bannatyne, William Fraser, Robert Hamilton, and William J. Christie. They held their first meeting on the 8th of March. An interesting fact was that Mr. Christie, who was a well-known Hudson's Bay Factor, came two thousand miles from Fort Simpson to Fort Garry to attend that meeting, taking nearly two months to make the journey. In 1873, Hon. James McKay, Hon. Joseph Royal, Pierre Delorme, W. R. Bown, and W. N. Kennedy were added to the Council, which held its first important session in Winnipeg in 1874. On April 27th, 1874, a proclamation was published prohibiting the manufacture, importation and sale of strong drink in the Territories. Next year John H. McTavish and William Tait were added to the Council. In 1875, the Act for the organization of the North-West Territories was introduced in Ottawa by the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, giving extensive powers. This Act was

proclaimed in force on the 7th October, 1876, when the Hon. David Laird was appointed the first Lieutenant-Governor and Superintendent of Indians, with a Council consisting of Stipendiary Magistrates McLeod, Ryan, Richardson, and Major Irvine. Mr. A. E. Forget was Secretary of the Council, and Mr. Molyneux St. John, Sheriff. They were sworn in at Livingstone, Swan River, awaiting the completion of the Government Buildings at Battleford, the then capital, and held their first session at Swan River in March, 1877, passing laws for the administration of justice, the preservation of the buffalo, prevention of fires, and the guarding of the public health, the last being important on account of many epidemics, like smallpox, amongst the Indians. The Act to prevent the extermination of the buffalo gave rise to trouble, and the half-breeds and the Sioux chief, Sitting Bull, did all they could to stir up the Blackfeet, the great tribe mainly affected. Two elements prevented outbreak. The one was the presence of the Mounted Police, the famous force that for the last forty years has exhibited a courage, judgment, and endurance unequalled, perhaps, by any similar body of men in history. The other influence was that of the new Governor, David Laird, "the man who talked straight," and whose commanding appearance and outstanding spirit of fairness did immense service in making treaties

with the Indians and keeping them contented under rapidly changing conditions of life. The presence of men like Governors Morris and Laird, with intermediaries like James McKay, along with the Hudson's Bay men and the missionaries, did work for the welfare of Canada whose greatness can only be understood by those who know the conditions of the time.

At this particular time in October, 1877, Laird made a treaty with the Blackfeet Indians, the most warlike of all the tribes. On that occasion Crowfoot, the noted chief, whom I saw often in later years, made a remarkable speech. Sometimes presents were made of food before conference was held, but Crowfoot said, "No; let us talk first; then if we agree, we can eat." In his speech he paid a great tribute to the Mounted Police, who "have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter." He also said, "I speak for all my people, and I trust the Great Spirit will put it into their hearts to be good people." When, in later years, some of us stood in Crowfoot's presence, at the time that Riel was trying to inflame the Indians everywhere, we had cause to be grateful to Laird and the men who had brought Crowfoot and his people into the treaty they observed so well. In 1879, Mr. Edgar Dewdney was appointed Superintendent of Indians, as Governor Laird began to feel the double duties too onerous;

and in 1881 Mr. Dewdney succeeded Laird as Governor. The Territories were now divided into electoral districts, with a Legislative Assembly meeting at Regina, and into Dominion constituencies, with the privilege of sending four members to the House of Commons. This was the beginning of responsible government in the Territories, but some years were to elapse before the people would have a full measure of participation.

On March 27th, 1883, an Order-in-Council was passed, removing the capital from Battleford to Regina. This place was formerly Pile of Bones Creek, but had been named Regina by the Marquis of Lorne in 1881. The rival claimants for the honor of being the capital were several, and the fight was hot; but finally the contest seemed to narrow down to Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina. The selection was left to Mr. Dewdney, and he made choice of Regina. For beauty of situation and general fitness as the abiding-place of a large city, nine out of ten men, one would suppose, would have selected Fort Qu'Appelle; but there is no accounting for what may lie behind the decision of the tenth on almost any subject in the world. There may have been a hundred reasons for choosing Regina that we know nothing about. There was much talk about a ring of speculators who pulled the capital to Regina and then scattering the public buildings

around to boom various subdivisions; but none of these rumors may have had any foundation. Regina has made the best of it, and has built up a city of much beauty on about as unlikely a site as we ever saw in the old days on the plains; and for the rest of it, we must charitably assume that the location was settled for worthy reasons.

When the North-West Council met at Regina, in August, 1883, Governor Dewdney in the chair, the appointed members were: Colonel Irvine, Messrs. Breland, Pascal and Hayter Reed; Colonels McLeod and Richardson, Stipendiary Magistrates, members *ex-officio*; and Messrs. Frank Oliver, D. H. McDowall, J. C. Hamilton, Jas. H. Ross, T. W. Jackson, and William White. New electoral divisions were added from time to time until the year 1888, when the whole system of governing the territories was changed, the North-West Council being abolished and the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories being established. In the same year, in July, Governor Dewdney's term expired, when he retired, to be elected to the House of Commons; and the Hon. Joseph Royal reigned as Governor in his stead.

Before this date, however, and during Mr. Dewdney's term of office, the startling and lamentable event known as the second Riel Rebellion had taken place, in 1885.

Just what gave rise to the North-West rebellion is perhaps more than anyone can definitely say. Political gladiators have fought the question over and over again to no definite end, and probably the great parties have their own opinion in the matter to this day, though they may be chary about telling all they know. It appears certain that the French half-breeds who were settled on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River (many of them being the same, or of the same, families as those concerned in the Riel rebellion of '69) were determined to hold to the old system of long, narrow farms fronting on the river, as against the rectangular, or "square," survey proposed by the Government, which threatened to break up the homes they had built and overturn the old social life fostered by contiguous residence; and it seems also tolerably clear that many of the settlers had been waiting an extraordinarily long time for their land patents and scrip. These things were sufficient to unsettle the easily-ruffled and somewhat turbulent half-breed element, and once anything like rebellion was contemplated, the aid of their duskier brethren all over the great plains was confidently expected.

The local authorities seem to have been singularly oblivious of the excitement that was afoot, and of the meetings that were being held for the redress of the wrongs alleged. They do not seem to have kept those at the seat of

federal government properly informed as to the true state of matters at the scene of the discontent, nor of the important fact that many of the white settlers in the region sympathized with the malcontents at the outset, though deprecating the use of any but constitutional means for redress; but it is doubtful whether the discontent that seethed under the surface would ever have burst into active rebellion had not the agitators sent for Louis Riel, who, since his first escapade, had been living in the United States, and who, at the time he was sent for, was engaged in the quiet work of school-teaching in St. Peter's Mission in Montana. The malcontents felt that, with his energetic personality at their head, they could secure all the rights they claimed, and so despatched a deputation asking him to come and lead them in their struggle. The deputation consisted of Gabriel Dumont, James Isbister, Moise Ouellette, and Michel Dumas, and there was also the following extraordinary letter from a well-known priest, Father André:

*"My dear Mr. Riel,—*

*"The opinion here is so prominent in your favor, and longs for you so ardently, that it would be a great disappointment to the people of Prince Albert if you did not come. So you see, you absolutely must come. You are the most popular man in the country, and, with the exception of four or five persons, all the world*



impatiently expects you. I have only this to say—Come; come quickly. With kind remembrances, I am,

“A. ANDRÉ.”

Riel's reply indicates that he was susceptible to all this flattery, and that at the same time he hoped to better his own position. So he came back with the deputation, reaching Batoche on July 1st, 1884. The very presence of the man on the ground should have put the local authorities on the alert; but either the local powers were making light of the situation, or else the pigeon-holes at Ottawa were receiving unread petitions, and so far as we can gather, we incline to the former as the more correct opinion.

A revolution is often a delayed reformation, and, as anyone who knew Riel should have expected, the inevitable sequel came. He was a man easily excited and inordinately vain; hence, as he felt the wine of a new movement in his system, and became intoxicated with the success of his fiery appeals to the meetings that assembled, he broke out into amazing and extravagant pretensions. He openly separated from the Church of Rome, and such was his influence over the French half-breeds that he drew them from allegiance to their priests. He added David to his name, and called himself “Louis David Riel exovede,” in allusion to

both his kingly and his priestly claims; he established a government, with headquarters at Batoche, arrested whom he pleased, plundered the stores around, and sent word to Major Crozier, who commanded the Mounted Police at Fort Carlton, the nearest post, to surrender at once. This was rushing matters with a vengeance, and it is not surprising that, on the 19th of March, Major Crozier, hearing of these things, sent word to Prince Albert for help, and shortly afterwards despatched Thomas McKay, one of the Prince Albert volunteers, to remonstrate with Riel.

When Thomas McKay reached Riel's Council at Batoche, he found things at white heat, and was told by Riel that there was to be a war of extermination, during which "the two curses, the Government and the Hudson's Bay Company," and all who sympathized with them, were to be driven out of the country. "You don't know what we are after," said Riel to McKay. "We want blood, blood—it's blood we want." McKay, barely escaping with his life from such a gory atmosphere, returned to Carlton, and the next day, in company with Mitchell, of Duck Lake, met Nolin and Maxime Lepine (brother of Ambroise Lepine, Riel's adjutant in '69-'70), from Riel, demanding the surrender of Fort Carlton. This, of course, was refused, and in a few days rebellion was rampant, with a madman at its head.

For many weeks previous Riel had been sending his runners amongst the Indians, and counted on a general uprising of the tribes, assuring them that the Government could easily be overthrown, and that the whole country would be theirs again. We can forgive Riel for a good many things, but to justify his incitement of the Indians to murder and rapine is more than any reasonable person cares to undertake. As a rule the Indians were perfectly satisfied on the splendid reserves the Government had provided for them, were well cared for and taught; but the savage instinct was still strong in them, and to let them loose on defenceless homes, with all the horrors of the scalping-knife and the torture, is more than can be justified.

The first actual clash came on March 26th, 1885, when Major Crozier, with a small force of police and Prince Albert volunteers, went out from Carlton to Duck Lake to support the teams that had gone forward to bring in some Government stores. They were met by a much larger force of half-breeds and Indians, under Gabriel Dumont and Chief Beardy, who wanted to parley under a white flag; but two men got into an altercation, and a rifle was discharged. By this time Dumont's force had secured the advantage of position, so that when firing became general our men suffered heavily. Crozier ordered his six-pounder to open fire,

but he was in the line of the gun at the time, and it could not be used, though he said afterwards that his orders should have been carried out regardless of his safety. After an hour of hard fighting, Crozier ordered his men to retire to Fort Carlton, which they left in a day or two in order to garrison Prince Albert, where a large settlement needed protection.

This Gabriel Dumont was certainly the most striking figure amongst the rebels in all the fighting which followed the battle at Duck Lake. He was living quietly enough upon his farm on the South Saskatchewan when the agitation began, but from his noted prowess and activity in the conflicts and hunts on the great plains in former years, became at once the acknowledged military leader of the rebel force. He was a man of magnificent physique and vast strength, a daring rider, a deadly shot, and, withal, possessed of undoubted dash and courage. He was wounded at Duck Lake, but not incapacitated. From what I knew of Dumont I have no doubt he felt compelled to make a stand for the rights of his people; and the fact that many of the white settlers sympathized with the general attitude of these men prior to armed rebellion indicates that their position, though not justifying resort to arms, was not by any means unreasonable. This temporary success at Duck Lake intoxicated Riel, and, in his usual wild way, he continued

to stir up the Indians to revolt, and, only for the restraint exercised by missionaries, who amply demonstrated the value of missions that year, and the presence of the Mounted Police here and there, the results might have been terrible.

There were many who strongly criticized Crozier's precipitate action, as they called it, in starting out from Carlton with a small body of men; but, in answer to that, it should be said that the police tradition has always been not to temporize with lawlessness, and the question of odds against them was never considered in all their history on Western plains. Crozier's idea was, no doubt, to nip the insurrection in the bud.

Duck Lake, in any case, put a sudden end to procrastinating officialdom, and troops, in larger numbers than could be used, were volunteering from all parts of Canada. General Middleton, a gallant veteran of many wars, who was then at the head of the militia, hurried from Ottawa to Winnipeg, where he arrived on March 27th, leaving the same night for the scene of the trouble, with all the Winnipeg troops that were available. Two more regiments were specially raised in Winnipeg and the country round about without delay.

The situation was, briefly, this: Riel and Dumont were on the South Saskatchewan, near Batoche, which was the rebel headquarters.

Chief Poundmaker and his Indians were menacing Battleford. Chief Big Bear and his band massacred nine people at the Frog Lake Reserve, and were on a pillaging and murdering expedition that threatened Fort Pitt, Edmonton, and all the region round about; and the plan of Middleton was to strike at all three points, and prevent disaffection spreading amongst the Indians.

Our account of these three movements against the rebels need not be extended, as an outline, with some record of results, will meet the requirements of the present publication.

General Middleton, whose movements were hampered somewhat by difficulty of prairie transportation in the spring of the year, first came in contact with the rebels, on April 24th, under Dumont at Fish Creek, near Batoche, where the enemy knew the ground and took every advantage of ravines and other familiar configurations of the locality; and it is somewhat curious to find that the scouts under Boulton, who himself had been imprisoned and sentenced to death by Riel during the first rebellion, were the first to come into collision with Riel's forces in the second. The fighting at Fish Creek was quite heavy for that kind of warfare, and Middleton lost a considerable number of men before dislodging the enemy from the ravine as night fell. Then for some days our men remained in camp, reinforcements



MAJOR STEELE



LIEUT.-COLONEL OTTER



MAJOR-GEN. STRANGE



GENERAL MIDDLETON

OFFICERS OF CANADIAN FORCES DURING THE  
REBELLION OF 1885





coming up in the meantime; and from the 9th to the 12th of May the attack on Batoche was carried on, ending in complete victory for our men on the latter date. On inspecting the rebel position after the battle, General Middleton said, "I was astonished at the strength of the position and at the ingenuity and skill displayed in the construction of the rifle pits, which effectually protected the rebels from our fire."

It is now common knowledge that General Middleton, whose personal courage and skill were beyond all doubt, was sceptical about the qualities of the "raw troops" of Canada, and that on that account he had hesitated a good deal about throwing them into action; but it is said, on the other hand, in his defence that he considered his men were differently situated from regular soldiers, who always counted on the risks of battle. The Canadian soldiers were citizens volunteering for service, and their homes and their communities must be spared the loss of these men as far as possible. However it was, it soon became known to many that Batoche was taken by an advance made without the General's orders. The men had become impatient of restraint, and so had their regimental commanders, till, on the third day, they started the rush, led by Colonels Williams, Grassett, Straubenzie, Buchan, and others.

Middleton was in his tent, and, on hearing cheers, rushed out to inquire, when a scout said, "They are charging, sir"; and Middleton, leaping on his horse, was in at the death with the rest. It is needless to say that by this year of grace British officers have found out that they can depend on Canadian lads to the utmost anywhere.

After Batoche, Dumont escaped to the other side of the line, but returned later and died on his homestead. Riel was found in a clump of bushes by Tom Hourie, one of Middleton's half-breed scouts. That giant lifted the rebel leader up behind him on his horse, and took him to Middleton's tent. From thence Riel was sent to Regina; and it is another curious thing that the officer put in charge of the rebel chief was Captain George Young, of Winnipeg, whose father, the Rev. George Young, had pleaded with Riel in vain for the life of Scott in the first rebellion. Tom Hourie, whom I knew well, was much lionized in Winnipeg and elsewhere for his capture of Riel; but lionizing in the city is death to a prairie man. Even Tom's superb physique could not stand the process; his health gave way, and he died in poverty in the Yukon.

Meanwhile, as Middleton was driving at the centre, the other divisions were not idle. Colonel Otter, of Toronto, with his brigade,

made a swift march to Battleford from the nearest point on the Canadian Pacific. He raised the siege there, where the whole community was inside the stockade, and then, after a few days, he went out to attack Poundmaker at Cut Knife. The enemy outnumbered Otter's men, and had all the advantage of situation on the sides of the ravine, so that Otter did not succeed in dislodging the enemy, but extricated his men in good order, and waited for Middleton to arrive. Otter has been criticized for his move on Cut Knife, but he thought there was danger of Poundmaker effecting a junction with Big Bear and blotting out the settlers at many points. Cut Knife held Poundmaker until he came in and surrendered to Middleton at Battleford.

Our third brigade assembled at Calgary, under General Strange, a noted artillery officer, who had done distinguished service in India and elsewhere. In this brigade I had the honor to serve as a lieutenant of infantry. We left Calgary, and marched northward 210 miles to Edmonton, where the inhabitants, who were surrounded by many Indian reserves that might follow Big Bear on the war-path, welcomed us heartily. Going northward, we passed Frog Lake, where we buried the bodies of the massacred; reached Fort Pitt, which we found burning; pushed on and

engaged Big Bear in a two days' skirmish, which ended in the scattering of his band and the release of the prisoners. Incidentally it might be said that the Indians were not Huns, and that women and children had been quite safe in their camps until released.

In our brigade we were fortunate in having with us, in command of the scouts, Major Sam. B. Steele (recently knighted), whose dash and courage, then exemplified in a smaller sphere, have been demonstrated since in wars that have made him world-famous. We had also with us Major A. Bowen Perry, from Fort McLeod, whose masterly handling of the Royal North-West Mounted Police Force, as Commissioner, made that remarkable body of men widely known as the most effective force of its kind to be found anywhere. In Middleton's column perhaps one of the most picturesque figures was Captain Howard, of the United States Militia, who did gallant work with his Gatling, and who fell in the Boer War, in the service of our Empire; and one of the brilliant men in the Battleford district was Scout Ross, who did unique service, and who went out as a free-lance to the Boer War also.

As to the fate of the rebels, several Indians, who had committed murder, were hanged, while Big Bear and Poundmaker were imprisoned for a term, but released when their health



To His Honor Hugh Richardson,  
Judge. P. M.

Your Honor,

I thank you for having  
goodly bestowed the con-  
tributed of the sentence as  
against me. I shall make  
use of those days, added  
to my life, so as to prefer  
better. And by God's do-  
ing and favorable man-  
agement, my life is to be  
spared, I will endeavor  
to render it more useful.

than it has been and the past.  
I pray to God that twenty  
nine years be added to  
your life, in reward of the  
twenty nine days which  
you have kindly bestowed  
to grant me.

My thanks to all those  
who have so generously  
contributed and worked  
to secure me such a pre-  
cious addition of my days  
to you, and to them all,  
My thanks, but the warm-  
est of my thanks.

Very respectfully

Your humble and obedient

Servant "David" Riel.

17th Feb.

1885.

Signe

pie.

Characteristic Letter Written by Riel when the date of his Execution was Postponed.

had broken through confinement. Riel was tried in Regina and condemned to death, after a great battle of legal talent and an immense amount of evidence as to his sanity or otherwise; the conclusion being that he knew right from wrong and was shrewd enough to wish to sell out for a certain sum of money and return to Montana. Appeal was taken to the Full Court in Winnipeg on the question of the jurisdiction of the trial court at Regina. As a law student I attended and heard the argument at Winnipeg, and have a vivid recollection of the battle of giants there. Messrs. Christopher Robinson and B. B. Osler acted with local men for the Crown, and Messrs. F. X. Lemieux and Charles Fitzpatrick for Riel. The whole situation was extremely tense, and these mighty men of law gave a dramatic exhibition of brilliant dialectic sword-play. The sentence of the Regina court was confirmed at Winnipeg, and later on by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England. Riel was executed at Regina, going bravely to the scaffold, and saying he forgave all his enemies. His body was given to the family for burial in St. Boniface, where he was born and where he attended school. On the day of his funeral some miscreant threw dodgers around Winnipeg, calling on men to capture the body and prevent Christian burial. A number of us, who

had fought against Riel, but who had no sympathy with such a ghoulish proposal, crossed over the Red River on the ice to see that nothing of the kind would be done. However, no attempt was made to carry out the proposal for the capture of the body, which was just as well. There was a strong feeling amongst his compatriots that Riel had tried to champion their cause; and even those who held that he had gone too far were not prepared to stand by and see his body dishonored; and so these stalwart plainsmen, with flashing eyes, came marching up the walk and the wide cathedral aisle, eight deep around the coffin. One whom I knew said that every one of their women present had a weapon to hand to the men if required. The service was very impressive. If he had only kept his hands free of blood, many there are who would honor the memory of the ill-fated man, whose body rests in historic St. Boniface, with the one word "Riel" on his monument there.

Over in the cemetery of St. John's Cathedral, on the other side of the Red River, there is a large plot, in which lie buried the bodies of many of our men who died in that rebellion time, upholding British principles and defending the menaced settlements on western plains. They were of the same heroic Canadian stuff that has astonished the world in larger conflicts, and deserve to be gratefully remembered.



### *The Vast Prairie Section*

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The muffled drum's sad roll has beat  
Our soldier's last tattoo,  
No more on life's parade shall meet  
That brave and fallen few.  
On Fame's eternal camping ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn round  
The bivouac of the dead.  
Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead,  
Dear as the blood ye gave;  
No impious footstep here shall tread  
The herbage of your grave!  
Nor shall your glory be forgot  
While Fame her record keeps,  
Or Honor points the hallowed spot  
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *TERRITORIES BECOME PROVINCES.*

IN following the civil development of the North-West Territories we noted, in the last chapter, that the year 1888 witnessed the establishment of a new system of government, in which the people were to have a larger share than ever before. The old North-West Council was set aside, and the Legislative Assembly of the Territories was brought into existence. The people were to have twenty-two representatives, Assiniboia eleven, Alberta six and Saskatchewan five. The Assembly was to elect its Speaker and have power to legislate on practically all matters of a local or domestic character. The members were to be elected by open voting. There were to be three appointed members, men of special legal knowledge, who would have the privilege of taking part in discussion in the Assembly, but who could not vote.

A provision of the Act, over the working of which there was considerable strain in the next few years, was that which empowered the Lieutenant-Governor to choose four members out of the Assembly, to act with him, and form a sort of Executive "in all matters of finance."



HON. W. M. MARTIN  
Premier of Saskatchewan.



When this Act was about becoming law, Mr. Dewdney was closing his term of office as Governor, and the Hon. Joseph Royal, an able, but somewhat autocratic, man succeeded, as we have already mentioned. The first elections under the new order were held in June, 1888, and, following our plan to record foundation history, we give the list of members of the first Legislative Assembly in the Territories: James R. Neff, Joel Reaman, A. G. Thorburn, John G. Turriff, B. P. Richardson, G. S. Davidson, W. Sutherland, David F. Jelly, John Secord, James H. Ross, Thomas Tweed, F. W. G. Haultain, John Linchorn, Hugh S. Cayley, Dr. R. G. Brett, Dr. H. C. Wilson, Frank Oliver, James Clinkskill, William Plaxton, John F. Brett, Hillyard Mitchell, and James Hoey.

The first session of this first Legislative Assembly convened in Regina on October 31st, 1888. Governor Royal announced that Justices McLeod, Rouleau and Richardson were selected as special legal advisers, and that he had appointed Messrs. Fred. W. G. Haultain, D. F. Jelly, William Sutherland, and Hillyard Mitchell as his Advisory Council. Dr. Herbert Wilson was elected first Speaker of the House.

At the Dominion Parliament, in 1889, an Act was passed giving wider powers to the Legislative Assembly; but the Assembly was not yet satisfied with the scope of its authority.

When the Assembly met in October of 1889, there was trouble in the matter of the powers of the Advisory Council, the members thereof considering their powers too limited; so they resigned. The Governor appointed another Advisory Council; but after a while they also sent in their resignation. The Assembly claimed that the Advisory Council should have power in connection with "all matters of finance," both Territorial and Dominion funds; but Governor Royal held that their powers were confined to Territorial funds. After the second Council had resigned, the Governor tried for a third; but Mr. Tweed, who was approached, declined to take office unless the Council controlled the expenditure of all funds. So there was friction, and practically a deadlock. At the next session, the Governor selected an Advisory Council "who would act whether they possessed the confidence of the Assembly or not." This did not please the Assembly, and the fight kept up with interest. The Assembly wanted responsible government. After the next election, Mr. James H. Ross, of Moosejaw, one of the ablest and most useful men in the West, who was afterwards Governor of the Yukon and Senator, was elected Speaker; and early in the session the Governor sent word to the Assembly that the power they had desired as to control of expenditure was granted. Later, a new Government was announced: Mr. Fred.

W. G. Haultain, Premier, with Messrs. Tweed, Neff and Clinkskill. It is perhaps not too much to say that from that time forward until the Territories entered Confederation as provinces, Mr. Haultain and Mr. Ross were in large measure the directing minds in the course of the country's progress. They were of opposite political parties in the Dominion arena; but party politics were kept in the background, with good results, in the Territorial days. These two men, with others, of course—practically the whole Assembly in Governor Royal's time—fought strenuously for responsible government. The reply of the Governor and the Ottawa Government of that period always was that the Assembly was in advance of the people in this regard. This seems to have been the case in some considerable measure, because, when autonomy was finally granted, in 1905, and the Territories became the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the people, amid the general jubilation of the occasion, and the cracking of party whips, submitted astonishingly to the loss of such rights as the right to deal, under the Constitution, with their own school problem and some other matters.

What we ordinarily call party seems to be practically involved in the idea and the working of responsible government; but it is doubtful whether much good comes from bringing Dominion party names into provincial and

municipal politics. The provinces do not deal with the wide fiscal and trade issues on which largely the cleavage comes at Ottawa, and hence we do not see what good obtains through projecting names that arose out of different issues into spheres where these issues hardly obtain at all. In any case, the introduction of Dominion party appellations into municipal affairs seems highly absurd, unless we think we ought to build Liberal roads and Conservative sidewalks. Party, in some form, may be of the essence of responsible government, but one can be a party man without being so narrowly partisan that he believes no good thing can come out of Nazareth. After fifty years of Confederation, we feel that the violent partisan is a menace to good government, and that the party man who is so independent within the party that he will dare to be true to his high convictions in the face of the party caucus or the party convention, will save that party from moral collapse. Defeat is nothing, but moral collapse is always a calamity for the party and for the country.

After the suppression of the Riel rebellion and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the development of the North-West Territories was rapid. Thousands of men who had campaigned as soldiers became, when they returned home, the best possible immigration agents for the vast and wonderful prairies over



which they had marched. Along the line of railway cities sprang up where hamlets had been struggling, and towns grew where solitude had reigned supreme. Calgary, for instance, which we had seen as a frontier village of shacks on the plain, grew speedily into a city on the beautiful upland between the Bow and the Elbow, backed by the majestic view of the Rockies; and many buildings of the famous Calgary grey stone began to make their appearance. Over the trail by which we had arduously marched from Calgary northward, a railway went to Edmonton, which sprang up into wealth and beauty by the banks of the wide-flowing North Saskatchewan. Regina expanded beyond the recognition of those who had known the village by the Wascana. Moosejaw, where we found scarcely enough people to give us breakfast in the rebellion day, became a city in the midst of a wonderful vista of wheatfields. Saskatoon, where we had pitched our hospital tents to care for the wounded from Fish Creek and Batoche, suddenly arose into a fine city in the centre of great agricultural production; and out to the north, Prince Albert, where, in Riel's time, we had seen the old mission and the scattered houses by the river bank, became a thriving centre of business, with prospects, not only from the east, but northward, by being linked to the Hudson Bay; and so with many other places we could mention, in varying scale. The

prairies, which some of us had seen in the undisputed possession of the Indian, the trader, and the wild animals they hunted, began to swarm with human life; and not only from British and American countries, but from many alien lands in Europe, immigrants commenced to build homes and to turn with the ploughshare the virgin sod of the plains.

It became inevitable that these Territories, thus expanding, must be accorded the full status of provinces in Confederation; and so, in 1905, as we have noted, the North-West Territories became the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, with capitals at Edmonton and Regina, respectively. For Alberta, Mr. George H. V. Bulyea was appointed Governor, and he called on Mr. A. C. Rutherford to form a Government. Mr. Rutherford called to his Cabinet Messrs. Charles W. Cross, W. H. Cushing, W. T. Findlay, and L. De Veber, the last-named without portfolio. In Saskatchewan, Mr. A. E. Forget was appointed Governor, and he called on Mr. Walter Scott to form a Government. To his Cabinet Mr. Scott invited Messrs. John H. Lamont, W. R. Motherwell, and Jas. A. Calder. The surprise of the occasion was the setting aside of Mr. Fred. W. G. Haultain, who at the time was Premier of the Government of the Territories. The country witnessed, with a sense of shock, the side-tracking of the man who, for many years,

with great wisdom and ability, had guided the destinies of the Territories; and this side-tracking of Mr. Haultain was aggravated by the fact that the Laurier-Fitzpatrick Government at Ottawa had, at the same time, contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and the record of their own party, invaded the domain of the provinces by imposing on them some school legislation. It seems that, on account of his strong stand for provincial rights, Mr. Haultain was not acceptable to the Government at Ottawa, albeit that Government was of the political party which, under the Hon. Oliver Mowat and others, had been the consistent and aggressive champions of provincial rights ever since Confederation; but it is now well understood that the gist of Mr. Haultain's offending was not his political color, but the fact that his attitude on the school question was not pleasing to the Papal Ablegate at Ottawa, who was reported to be specially influential with Mr. Fitzpatrick, to whom, as Minister of Justice at Ottawa, had been entrusted the framing of the Bills which granted autonomy to the new provinces. One of the most intimate friends of Sir Wilfrid Laurier told me at the time in the East, that these two influences had sprung the whole business of the famous educational clauses of the Autonomy Bills on Sir Wilfrid Laurier in such a way that he had no course open, short of deliberately revealing the whole

situation, but to go through with the matter. Echoes of this were heard in elections in Ontario and elsewhere all over Canada at the time, and the educational clauses were modified somewhat, as we shall see in the chapter on educational history later. A few years after the event Mr. Haultain retired from active political life to the Bench, for which his eminently judicial qualities of mind give him special fitness.

There have been political ups and downs in both provinces during these recent years, but they are not necessarily to be considered as of special historical value. Elections have just been held in both provinces, in this year of grace 1917, and both have sustained the governments which belong to the Liberal party, though the personal element stands for more in these western provinces than the party tag. In Alberta, the Hon. Arthur Sifton was sustained as Premier. He was formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territories, and later of Alberta, and is everywhere recognized as an able jurist and administrator. He is a member of the well-known Sifton family, being a son of the late Hon. J. W. Sifton and a brother of the Hon. Clifford Sifton, formerly Minister of the Interior. Since the provincial election Premier Sifton responded to the invitation of Premier Borden to join the Union Government at Ottawa, and



HON. A. L. SIFTON

Former Premier of Alberta, but Recently Called to  
the Cabinet of the Union Government.



now the Hon. Charles Stewart is Premier of Alberta. He is a farmer by profession, and has had wide experience in both municipal and provincial public affairs, having held several portfolios in the Government. As a farmer he is in touch with the foundation industry of Alberta, and as Minister of Railways, as well as Premier, he will have good scope for his varied gifts.

In Saskatchewan the Liberal party fell on evil times through the scandalous manipulation of road and other contracts by unscrupulous hangers-on; but Mr. William M. Martin, a brilliant young lawyer of Regina, pulled it out of the mire, and is confirmed in his premiership by the overwhelming voice of the electorate. He is a son of the Rev. W. M. Martin, formerly of Exeter, Ontario, and the way in which he brought his party and his province through an ugly situation is a strong tribute to the commanding influence of character. One of the Saskatchewan Executive, Hon. J. A. Calder, went to Ottawa recently as a member of the Union Win-the-War Government. Mr. Calder has had a large place in Saskatchewan history, and will yet do much important work for his province.

Saskatchewan is the heart of the Empire's western granary. For successive years, largely through the extraordinary industry and skill of Mr. Seager Wheeler, a farmer at Rosthern,

Saskatchewan has been winning the world's prize for the highest grade of milling wheat known. Mr. Wheeler, by the perfecting of such wheat as the Marquis and the Red Bobs, has not only brought harvests earlier, but has made acres more productive. If pensions and decorations are in order in this troublous day of ours, this "soldier of the soil" should not be overlooked. In addition to her agricultural industries, Saskatchewan has lumbering in full swing in the Prince Albert and other northern districts.

Alberta is still more extensive in the range of her products. There is farming of all types, but coal areas, as well as oil, gas, asphalt, gypsum, and other products, are only on the threshold of development. Great belts of land in Southern Alberta, once considered too dry for farming, are, by the immense irrigation enterprises of the Canadian Pacific Railway and other processes, coming under successful cultivation. The ranch is giving way to the farm.

These Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, like the rest of the western country, have their problem of the foreigner. He has come from almost every quarter of the globe, and, to complicate matters, he has very often settled in colonies. This means that very often we come across a piece of Southern Europe, for instance, on the wide, free plains of the West.



It is easy to say that foreigners should not be allowed to settle in colonies; but when one attacks the problem at close quarters, he realizes the difficulty of carrying out the suggestions of the arm-chair man, who advises at long range. Some of these foreign colonies, during the present war, have been offensive enough, with the singing of their national anthems, and such like. They must be taught that people who come to enjoy the freedom of a British country have to be loyal to the British flag and all that for which it stands. The hope for the future lies in the younger generation, through the work of the Church and the school, as well as through social contact with young Canadians; and we venture to predict that the people of the Middle West will some day regret that they did not, on entering Confederation as provinces, consider more seriously the advisability of deciding that they should be at liberty to adopt one great public school system, if they so desired. In that day they will appeal to the Constitution for relief from a bifurcated system. When the young are put through the one educational hopper, they will all come out Canadians.

Since the Rebellion time, when the Canadian Pacific Railway was, amidst difficulties, dragging its slow length through the mountains, two other railways, the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Northern, have traversed the great

plains and added "Pacific" to their former titles; and all these roads are sending out branch lines, so that the ancient home of the buffalo is being gridironed and the products of the one-time wilderness are being distributed to all points of the compass over the earth. By the coming of a higher civilization the wilderness and the waste places have been made glad.

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HON. CHARLES STEWART

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *ALBERTA'S NEW NORTH.*

ALTHOUGH it is part of the Province of Alberta, the vast new area designated as the Peace River country demands special notice, since it is much less known than the rest of the Province, and its history, outlook and general possibilities are, in many ways, unique. Out there a new land is being opened up, big enough to cover several European kingdoms, and then have something to spare.

A year after Manitoba entered Confederation, one of my former teachers left Toronto, to come westward and make his home in the City of Winnipeg; and he used to relate how his friends in the former city condoled with him on his deciding to go to the Winnipeg country, which, they said, was "hyper-borean," and where no one could live very well except Indians and wolves, who were at home amid snow and ice. In that day some people evidently thought Winnipeg to be somewhat beyond the pale of civilized comfort and productiveness; and when, later on, men began to go into the Edmonton country, some six hundred miles farther to the north-westward, there were some who stood aghast at their

temerity, and bade them a sorrowful good-bye; but, a few months ago, I had the pleasure of going out some two hundred miles north from Edmonton, and standing amidst wonderful harvest fields near the old Peace River Crossing; while some two hundred and twenty-five miles north of that point we find Fort Vermilion, where the big Lawrence farm has been in operation for years, producing wheat of the finest milling quality in the world; and last year, when, on account of an unusually wet and cold summer, the frost in August caught some of the crops farther east unripe, the Fort Vermilion country remained untouched. Thus we see how the map of Canada has been rolling backward until, by degrees, we have come to understand that this Dominion is possessed of a country so vast in extent and so rich in resources that we have hardly begun to understand the illimitable material possibilities that lie within our borders.

If we still keep in mind our postulate, that a country's real history only begins with its colonization, then the Peace River country has no real history earlier than a generation ago; but, leaving out the prehistoric times, when "wild in woods the noble savage ran," we recall the fact that for a century and a half the old fur-traders and explorers passed and repassed through the vast north land. When Sir Alexander Mackenzie had explored the

great river which bears his name, he resolved, in 1792, to go by way of the Peace River on his wonderful journey overland to the Western Sea; and, when I visited the Peace River country, one could not but feel a thrill as he stood on the foundation of the old fort on that river, from which Mackenzie started out, as mentioned in an earlier chapter. But our main interest now is not with the days of the explorer, who was not looking specially towards the possibility of colonization. Rather we are concerned with the work of those who labored and left on record their expectation that here, some day, many thousands of people would have happy and prosperous homes.

The Peace River, which gives its name to the whole country it drains, has its source far up in the mountains, where the Finlay and the Parsnip Rivers come together to form one mighty stream, which, in turn, after a wondrous pilgrimage of nearly nine hundred miles, falls into the great Mackenzie, and so on to the Arctic Sea. It is with the country drained by the Peace for three hundred miles from its source, to its junction with the Big Smoky River, thence northward some two hundred and fifty miles to Fort Vermilion, that we are mainly concerned now. This is, in fact, the Peace River country, as we commonly use the term. It is said that the designation of the river is due to its wide-sweeping, even flow. How-

ever that be, we can all appreciate the thought in the mind of the soldier, who had been in the edge of hell at the front, and who wrote that when he came back he was going up into the Peace River country. He said he did not know much about it, but he liked the name.

The famous fur-trader, Harmon, who kept so exact a journal in the North more than a century ago, spent some time at Fort Dunvegan, which, recently, I had the pleasure of visiting—the old fort built by Trader McLeod, and called by him after the home of his ancestors in the Isle of Skye. Harmon writes about going into winter quarters there in 1808, and says, “Our principal food will be the flesh of the buffalo, moose, red deer, and bear. We have a tolerably good kitchen garden, and we are in no fear that we shall want the means of a comfortable subsistence.” In an entry in his diary, dated May 6th, the following spring, Harmon states, “We have planted our potatoes, and sowed most of our garden seeds.” Under date June 2nd, the same year, we find the entry, “The seeds, which we sowed in the garden, have sprung up, and grow remarkably well. The present prospect is, that strawberries, red raspberries, shad-berries, cherries, etc., will be abundant this season.” On July 21st, Harmon writes, “We have cut down our barley, and I think it is the finest that I have



ever seen in any country. The soil on the points of land along this river is excellent."

I have met a good many men who were connected with the early surveys for railways through the mountains, and some of them still think the first line should have gone out through the Peace country, and by way of the Pine Pass to the coast. One of the arguments used by those who favored that idea was that a line built in that direction would open up, as one expressed it, speaking of the land south of the river, "a region probably comprising an area equal in extent to Manitoba, well wooded, with abundance of fresh water, of excellent soil, and in all probability possessing unlimited quantities of good coal. The climate is most salubrious, and, by all accounts, as mild as, if not milder than, that of Red River. On the extensive plains bordering upon Peace River, both north and south of it, snow rarely exceeds two feet in depth, and never packs."

The pioneer missionaries of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, who were early on the ground, did much to make the country known. As early as 1878 the Church of England secured Mr. Lawrence to go to Fort Vermilion to look after their farm, and it was from that farm that the Lawrence family began the extensive agricultural operations which attracted so much attention.

One of the first men to realize that the Peace

River country should be investigated, with a view to being opened, was our old friend, that enthusiastic Canadian, Dr. John Schultz, who figured so prominently in the first Riel rebellion. When a Senator at Ottawa, in the year 1886, he began to importune that venerable body to appoint a special committee to look into the matter. He kept at it until he got it done, though many thought it was useless to spend time on studying a country so far north. The result of the investigation, during which missionaries, surveyors, travellers, settlers, mounted policemen, and others were examined, showed that there was indeed a wonderful country up in the North; but, in its conclusion, the committee could scarcely advise settlers to push their way thither, since there was no railway communication to make living there, with profit, possible. And so matters stood, but, notwithstanding the absence of railways, settlers began to go in by twos and threes, and scatter along the banks of the Peace, as in the Shaftesbury settlement near the Crossing, begun thirty years ago by the Rev. J. Gough Brick, of the Church of England. Others went into the Spirit River district, south of Fort Dunvegan, on the Peace, and still others went into the Grande Prairie country, where, as one of the writers above quoted says, the region looks much like Manitoba.

And then, one day, three or four years ago,





J. D. M'ARTHUR

Who Opened the Peace River Country by Rail

Mr. J. D. McArthur, of Winnipeg, who, leaving Glengarry to work in the bush when a lad, had become one of the biggest railway builders on the continent, came on the scene. He had just finished a huge contract on the Grand Trunk Pacific, east of Winnipeg, and had set his hand to the building of the Hudson Bay Railway for the Dominion Government; but when he found that he could get hold of a charter for the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway through the Peace River country towards the coast he lost no time in beginning work; and so the steel track now displaces the trail of the trader of days gone by. McArthur has built from Edmonton to the old Peace River Crossing, and, continuing his main line, has crossed the Big Smoky River to the Spirit River country, and from that point south to the Grande Prairie. All this was not built when I was there. We travelled much by trail and river, and had specially good opportunities for seeing the country in its beauty and productivity.

We went down the Big Smoky to its junction with the Peace, near the present goodly City of Peace River. This city is growing up where McArthur's road reaches the old Crossing, made famous by the fur-traders more than a century ago. This will be a great scenic route some day, as the beauty of the country at the junction of the two big rivers, along with the

canyon of the Little Heart River from the south, is wonderful. In this connection I venture to give the following extract from a letter I wrote from this point at the time :

“The view up and down the wonderful Peace River, navigable for hundreds of miles, is surpassingly grand. There is evidence for this, not only in the vision of the living, but as testimony from the desire of the dead—for, away up the lofty hill looking over the present Peace River Crossing town, there is a fenced grave, where lies the dust of a noted miner named ‘Twelve-foot Davis,’ who, after having travelled much over the world, left directions that he should be buried here in the then wilderness, where he could look down on the incomparable scenery of the Peace. He died miles away, but, as in the case of Robert Louis Stevenson and Pauline Johnson, his last wishes as to a resting-place were fulfilled by friends; and so his dust reposes here on the hill, and over him there is this striking epitaph: ‘H. F. Davis, born in Vermont, 1820; died at Slave Lake, 1893; Pathfinder, Pioneer, Miner, and Trader. He was every man’s friend, and never locked his cabin door.’”

The city which is growing up at this point will be to the North country what Winnipeg is to the Middle West, and what Edmonton is to the nearer North.

We were all through the country in the harvest time, and were delighted with the fields of

ripened grain, with the luxuriant pasture lands, as well as with the splendid climate. The prolonged daylight produces rapid growth and early ripening.

Before closing this chapter, it is well to state that, in addition to the agricultural and stock-raising industry, which will be the mainstay of the North, we found Lord Rhondda's (formerly Mr. D. A. Thomas) men, building boats for their trade out towards Fort Vermilion, where the Welsh coal baron thinks there are enormous oil-fields to be opened. This, with the heavy timber limits by the Big Smoky and the Wapiti Rivers, will add much to the general business of the new North.

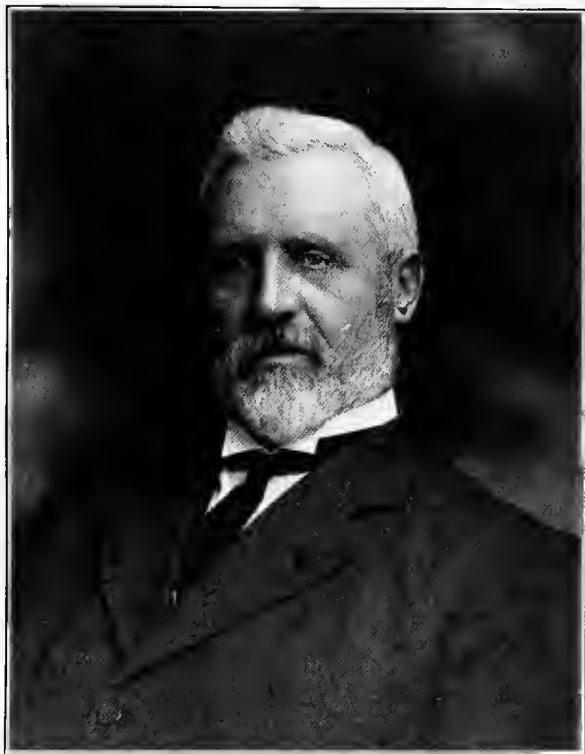
We, who were travelling through the country, were on missionary errands, and had no business axes to grind; but as Canadians we rejoiced in seeing the bounds of Empire being made broader by the addition of the Peace River region to the already immense resources of the Province of Alberta.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE PACIFIC PROVINCE.*

LATER on in this chapter we may see how some of British Columbia's people entered Confederation with reluctant feet, and how some of them, after Confederation, were willing to come out again; but they never became so unreasonable as to have an armed rebellion over the matter; and British Columbia has, from the first, politely, but firmly and wisely, declined to have that troublesome entity known in Canadian politics as a "school question." Hence, this province has been less in the lime-light before the Canadian public than some others. On that account some unthinking people, hearing less noise in this direction, might conclude that British Columbia does not possess the population or the resources necessary to make a large place for herself in the history of the Dominion; but, in reality, British Columbia is steadily forging ahead. Possessed of a climate unrivalled in Canada, and of boundless resources which have scarcely begun to be developed, and having a people whose superlatively optimistic energy has been tamed into its proper quality by experience, British Columbia bids fair to be one of the





HON. JOHN OLIVER  
Premier of British Columbia.



most populous, prosperous and influential of all the provinces. Of the climate it is unnecessary to speak at length. It is, on the whole, superb. It is not given to extremes. On the coast the grass is green practically all the year round, while in the crisp, dry valleys of the interior pulmonary troubles are practically unknown. The scenery is the finest on the continent, whether one considers the majestic splendor of the mountains, or the entrancing beauty of the coast cities fringed by the Pacific tide. The resources of the province are wonderful in their extent and variety. The salmon are famed the world over, and immense canneries are found all along the coasts and inlets. The lumber and shingle industries are unequalled. The tremendous squared timbers, requiring three flat cars for carriage, are known far and wide as "British Columbia toothpicks." The mineral wealth of the country encompasses almost every known product in its extent, and is practically awaiting development. The province has been mistakenly supposed to be non-agricultural, but the river bottoms, the deltas, and amazingly fertile valleys like the Okanagan, the Bulkley, the Nechako, and others, are rich in grain and almost every variety of fruit. Valleys hitherto unknown are being explored, and new areas suitable for ranching and mixed farming are being discovered. Vast industries, like ship-building and iron-working, are growing up into

great strength. The seaports face the myriads of the Orient, with whom trade is only as yet in its infancy. Three great transcontinental railway lines ply across from the older parts of Canada to the coast, and these are throwing out branches in many directions. The ports on the Pacific are open all the year round, and the great harbors are filled with shipping from all parts of the world. With her splendid climate and her astonishing resources, British Columbia is a province with a great future.

Her past is brilliant with romance and luminous with the shining achievements of her early explorers and pioneers; and that the people of this and succeeding generations may be worthy of the efforts and the sacrifices of the pathfinders, some study of history is to be encouraged.

The record stands that Captain Cook, who landed in 1778 at a point on Vancouver Island which he called Nootka, was the first actual discoverer of our western coast. Captains Hanna, Meares and Vancouver, all coming around Cape Horn, visited the island at different intervals from that date till 1792, the latter being the year when Captain Vancouver was an important factor in having the title to the coast, from California to Alaska, settled by arbitration between Spain and Great Britain, and turned over to the latter power. In 1793, Captain Vancouver came to the mainland, to the

site of the city now called by his name. He entered the narrows through which the great ships now pass into the harbor, and went seven miles up along the remarkable inlet. He found, before entering the inlet, a point of land, which, in honor of his friend, Captain Grey, he named Point Grey. Then he passed through to the harbor, which, in honor of Sir Harry Burrard, of the British Navy, he called Burrard Inlet or Canal. Then he went his way, and for three-score years the solitude was left undisturbed by the presence of the white man. The Indian rocked his canoe on the inlet, where on any day now one can see ships from every quarter of the globe, and no one disputed his lordship of the isles and the sea. The giant firs and the whispering cedars, through their sounding aisles, echoed the cry of the wild animals or the song of the birds, with only the accompaniment of the Indian shout; but the names given by Captain George Vancouver in that early day still abide.

And in that same year, as already related, there came across the continent the first white man to pierce the apparently impassable mountains to the Pacific, Alexander Mackenzie, the gallant explorer of the old North-West Fur Company, who blazed the way overland for a higher civilization.

Following these daring movements by sea and land, the Hudson's Bay and North-West

Fur Companies pressed on their explorations and established their posts here and there in New Caledonia, as the new territory was called by the indomitable Scots who did the work.

Simon Fraser explored the great river which bears his name in the years 1807-08, coming all the way from Fort George to the sea amid great hardships, and establishing many forts and posts in the interior. He, too, belonged to the North-West Fur Company, and his work in founding such establishments as Fort McLeod did much to hold this whole territory for the British Crown and show how absurd was the slogan of American adventurers, "Fifty-four-forty or fight," which was intended to "bluff" us off the Pacific coast by pushing the boundary line back to the Russian possessions. It was characteristic of most of these early explorers, like Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson, Harmon, and Robert Campbell, that they were men of pronounced religious convictions, as appears often by entries in their journals. In one place we find how strongly Fraser had impressed his sense of solemnity upon his party when an oath, taken by each one in the words, "I solemnly swear before Almighty God that I shall sooner perish than forsake in distress any of our crew during the present voyage," was the real secret of their final success. Many a deed was done in the silence and solitudes of the great mountains, which, if

wrought on other fields, would have won the Victoria Cross. Fraser, it is said, was offered knighthood for his services, but declined, and died in comparative poverty. It is to the credit of British Columbia that, with the cordial approval of all parties, the McBride Government, a few years ago, gave a pension to two of Fraser's female relatives, who were living in destitute circumstances in the East.

Following Fraser's work in the interior, John Stuart and Daniel Williams Harmon, whose names we met first of all at Fort Dunvegan, on the Peace River, did splendid work in exploring the interior of New Caledonia, founding posts, and, especially in Harmon's case, beginning the farming industry in what is now British Columbia. He had, as we recall, followed the same good practice at Fort Dunvegan.

To David Thompson, astronomer and general scientist, more than he was a fur-trader, must go the honor of finding and exploring several of the passes by which travellers now reach the coast by rail. He founded Fort Kamloops, explored the Kootenays, and investigated the course of the rivers. We find an entry in his diary, in 1807, when he is in the Kicking-Horse Pass, "May God in His mercy give me to see where the waters of this river flow into the western ocean." He lived to see.

David Douglas, the botanist, spent several

years in exploring the country drained by the Columbia and the Fraser Rivers, and discovered the tree which is most distinctive of this province, and which, after him, is called the "Douglas fir."

Robert Campbell, whom I knew well in his closing years, tall, serious, reserved and of leonine face, was the last of the explorers of the old type, mainly because after him there was not much left to be explored. He was a Hudson's Bay Company man, who, sent out by Sir George Simpson, travelled over the mountains into the Cassiar country, discovered the Pelly-Yukon River, and added immensely to the store of information concerning the northern interior of what is now British Columbia. Time and again he was in danger of his life at the hands of the Indians. Once he was saved by a chieftainess, and on another occasion he tells us that he picked up his Bible in the presence of what seemed imminent death, and the Indians, seeing the glow on his face through the comfort of the message, said he was in communion with the Great Spirit in the Book, and so they fell back in awe, and left him unharmed.

The most remarkable, probably, of all the fur-trading men, not as an explorer but as an administrator, was James (afterwards Sir James) Douglas, who, after some years' service at Fort St. James, where he narrowly



escaped death at the hands of the Indians, being saved by the interpreter's wife, went down to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River, where, with the noted John McLoughlin, he did much to enlarge the trade and the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1842, foreseeing the fact that Fort Vancouver and much else was likely to be swept into the United States by the extraordinary Oregon Treaty, this Douglas of the Angus stock looked up a site for another fort, and fixed upon the south end of Vancouver Island, where, in 1843, he built Fort Camosun (now Victoria). He wrote then of the excellence of the site of Victoria and the greatness of the harbor at Esquimalt. That his judgment was sound is evidenced by the fact that Victoria is the capital of the province and Esquimalt the headquarters of the British fleet on the Pacific. Victoria became the Hudson's Bay centre on the coast, and, settlers beginning to come, Vancouver Island became a Crown Colony in 1849, under the governorship of Mr. Richard Blanshard, who continued, amid somewhat difficult conditions, until 1851, when he left for England. He was succeeded by James Douglas. In the year 1856 a beginning of representative government was made on Vancouver Island. The settlers, though not very numerous, were asking for a share in the task of governing themselves, and in February, 1856, Governor Douglas received

instructions from the Home Government to call his Council and arrange for a popular election. Accordingly the governor, assisted by the Council, composed of John Tod, James Cooper, Roderick Finlayson, and John Grant, divided the island into four electoral districts—Victoria, Esquimalt, Nanaimo, and Sooke. There were very few electors in some of the districts, but the formalities were all complied with and a legislature elected. The names of these pioneer legislators were as follows:—

*Victoria.*—J. D. Pemberton, Joseph Yates, and E. E. Langford. Mr. Langford had not the necessary property qualification, and Mr. J. W. Mackay was elected in his stead. The others were elected by acclamation.

*Sooke.*—John Muir.

*Nanaimo.*—John F. Kennedy.

*Esquimalt.*—Dr. J. S. Helmcken and Thomas Skinner.

The first Assembly convened in August, 1856, and Dr. J. S. Helmcken was elected Speaker.

During this period the discovery of gold on the Fraser River, and the general attractiveness of the country, had drawn many settlers to the mainland, which was constituted a separate colony, though added to the jurisdiction of Governor Douglas. Settlement grew apace in this mainland colony of British Columbia, as it was called; great wagon roads were constructed

into the Cariboo mines and other parts; centres like New Westminster, Langley, Yale and Hope, on the Fraser River, became important, and discussion looking to a union of the two colonies became general. This was finally consummated by order of the Imperial Government in 1866. New Westminster was the capital of the mainland colony, and remained the chief seat of authority until 1868, when Victoria was proclaimed the capital of the whole country, as it remains to this day.

In 1860, Governor Douglas inaugurated a policy of road-building throughout the interior of the country, which culminated in the remarkable achievement of the famous Yale-Cariboo wagon trail. It began at Yale and went nearly four hundred miles into the mines of Cariboo. It was completed in 1865, a really wonderful road, winding like a great shelf through the mountains, and so solidly constructed with piling, cribbing, rock-cutting, and such like, that much of it could be used even to this day. This was the era of the noted miner, "Cariboo" Cameron, of Glengarry, and hosts of others equally well-known locally. The old Cariboo trail was the scene of much unspeakable romance, as well as tragedy and pathos. It required strong men to govern and to administer law in those days. Fortunately they were on hand; and before leaving this colonial period and passing into the Confederation era, a tribute

is in place to two of the most outstanding of these men, viz., Sir James Douglas and Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, the famous frontier judge.

Douglas was Governor of Vancouver Island from 1851, then of both colonies, and, on to the end of his term in 1864, of the mainland colony of British Columbia. He was at the same time a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and connected with one or two other commercial organizations; but, notwithstanding his connection with these varied interests, he exercised the office of governor with splendid ability, great dignity, and singular tact. His position conduced to autocracy, and certain sections of the community at times resented the strength of his iron hand; but it is difficult to conceive how any man could have done the country better service. Boundary disputes, rushes into the gold diggings, mixed population problems, and the unrest always characteristic of new countries, all threw their quota into making his tenure of office difficult and delicate; but his unstained personal character made him proof against calumny. On his leaving Victoria, at the close of his term of office, the *British Colonist* editorially said: "If we have at times opposed the measures of the government, we have never, in our discussion of the public acts of the executive head of that government, failed in our esteem for the sterling honesty of

purpose which guided those acts, nor for the manly and noble qualities and virtues which adorn the man." At a brilliant farewell banquet in the same city the chairman said: "The Governor during these formative years had to do everything; he had to organize, reorganize and create. His administration had been one alive to the interests of all and deaf to the clamor and vilification of interested parties." When he closed his term of office on the mainland a banquet was given in his honor in New Westminster. Addresses were presented by the Legislative Council, government officials, and by nine hundred residents from different points in the colony, all speaking in the most glowing manner of the way in which he had done his duty. A sentence in his reply is characteristic of his loftiness of sentiment: "A pyramid of gold and gems would have been less acceptable to me than this simple record. I ask for no prouder monument and for no other memorial when I die and go hence than the testimony here offered that I have done my duty."

Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, appointed in 1858 by Bulwer Lytton, became Chief Justice of the United Colonies, and later of the Province of British Columbia. Begbie was born in Edinburgh and educated at Cambridge. He practised sixteen years in the Old Land and then was appointed Judge of the Court in the Vancouver Island colony. From that date he

was the head and front of the judicial administration of the country until his death in 1894. The services he rendered to the new country during those critical years of indiscriminate immigration, frontier restlessness and gold mine excitement consisted in the profound impression he created as to the fearlessness, impartiality and dignity of a British Court of Justice. Adventurers who rushed into the country from excessively democratic surroundings and had the habit of being familiar and jocular with men on the Bench, were awed by the courtly bearing and dignified manner of the British judge, who had, withal, a keen intellect and an iron will. His name became a synonym for swift, unerring, fearless and even-handed justice to such an extent that British Columbia, contrary to every experience of countries similarly situated, has always been singularly free from crime. Great mining camps in the interior, in which were hundreds of sometimes rough and lawless men from many lands, got such a wholesome sense of British law, as administered by this upright judge, that one constable was often sufficient to preserve order. There is a splendid lesson here. There is such a thing as becoming too democratic. There is a value in the ermined robe and the uniform that should not be overlooked, because the free-and-easy judicial methods of some countries

have been conspicuously and historically injurious wherever they prevailed.

I happened to be in Victoria on the day of Sir Matthew's public funeral, in June, 1894, and was struck by the universal evidences of the esteem in which he was held in the community. Members of the Victoria Bar met in the court-house and passed a resolution, which closed with these words: "He has departed from us, full of years and honors; but his memory will remain as that of one whose judicial career has been without stain, and whose personal worth has won our deepest respect and affection." These two men left an indelible stamp upon the life of the Coast Province.

We are now coming to the Confederation period. The Fathers of Confederation had cherished the vision of a Dominion from sea to sea. British statesmen and papers began early to discuss the project, but many emphasized the difficulty of getting the extreme points of the proposed Confederation united by the link of railway communication.

Taking time by the forelock, a somewhat eccentric but very able man, Mr. Amor De Cosmos, in the first Legislative Council of the United Colony, introduced a resolution on March 10th, 1867 (when the Imperial Parliament was passing the British North America Act), asking that the colonies on the west coast be admitted to the proposed Confederation on

fair and equitable terms. This was somewhat premature, but it started the ball rolling. The United Colony realized that it needed help. Times were bad, gold mining was dying out, population was not growing, and the public debt was heavy; but opinion was actually divided as to whether annexation to the States or Confederation would be the better plan. Annexation sentiment was strong on the Island, and Governor Frederick Seymour was certainly not in favor of Confederation at the early stages of discussion, though he changed somewhat later on. In this connection, Sir John A. Macdonald, then Prime Minister of Canada, wrote to the Governor-General of Canada, suggesting that Lord Granville "should put the screws on at Vancouver Island," and further that Governor Seymour might be recalled and Governor Musgrave, of Newfoundland, be transferred to British Columbia. However, Governor Seymour died during a trip undertaken to settle some Indian quarrels, and Musgrave, who was favorable to Confederation, was appointed in 1869.

In 1868 the Dominion Government had asked the Home Government to get the British Columbia authorities to move in the matter. The said authorities were slow and somewhat hostile, and the people acted with characteristic Western vigor. On July 1st, 1868, a big open-air meeting was held at Barkerville, in the



Cariboo, where some "hot" speeches were made and motions were passed in favor of Confederation. In September of the same year a huge convention was held at Yale, where the people avowed their discontent with existing conditions and advocated Confederation on certain terms. The document, drawn up by Messrs. De Cosmos, Robson, Barnard, Babbit, McMillan, Thompson and Havelock, was a very able presentation of the case, yet the Legislative Council refused to take action; but in 1869 the Governor-General instructed Governor Musgrave, at Victoria, to do all he could to press the matter. Accordingly the Governor and his advisers prepared terms of union and submitted them to the Legislature in 1870. Then came a great debate on the subject. It was a struggle of giants, and every clause was discussed with immense energy and ability. When they were finally passed Messrs. Helmcken, Trutch and Carroll were chosen to negotiate with the Dominion Government. Mr. John Robson (afterwards Premier), who was a strong champion of Confederation, and one of the ablest men of his day, could not go, and it seemed strange that Doctor Helmcken, who was an opponent of the idea throughout, should have been selected. However, the result was satisfactory, and the delegates were royally entertained at the capital, Sir George E. Cartier being in charge of negotiations owing to the

illness of Sir John. *The Daily Colonist*, of Victoria, had sent Mr. H. E. Seelye as special correspondent, and on July 7th, 1870, Mr. Seelye sent the famous telegram to his paper, "Terms agreed upon. The delegates are satisfied. Canada is favorable to immediate union and guarantees the railway. Trutch has gone to England; Carroll remains one month; Helmcken and your correspondent on the way home." Mr. Trutch went on to England to arrange for the necessary Imperial legislation, and the Imperial Government endorsed the Dominion Government's guarantee as to the railway within ten years. British Columbia entered Confederation on July 20th, 1871.

The first Legislative Assembly of British Columbia under Confederation met in February, 1872, and consisted of the following twenty-five members:—

John F. McCreight (who was the first Premier), Simeon Duck, Robert Beaven, and James Trimble, for Victoria City; A. De Cosmos and Arthur Bunster, for Victoria District; Alexander R. Robertson and Henry Cogan, for Esquimalt; William Smith and John Paton Booth, for Cowichan; John Robson, for Nanaimo; John Ash, for Comox; Henry Holbrook, for New Westminster City; J. C. Hughes and W. J. Armstrong, for New Westminster District; Robert Smith, James Robinson, and Charles A. Semlin, for Yale;

A. T. Jamieson and T. B. Humphreys, for Lillooet; G. A. Walkem, Joseph Hunter, and Cornelius Booth, for Cariboo; John A. Mara and Charles Todd, for Kootenay.

The Governor, in his opening speech, congratulated the province upon relief from the burden of debt as arranged by the terms of Confederation, and on the prospect of the transcontinental line.

Then came the lean years, the years of depression practically everywhere, during which the Mackenzie Government in Ottawa found it very difficult to carry on a large enterprise like the Canadian Pacific Railway; and dissatisfaction arose in British Columbia. Things political were in a rather chaotic state in the province. Party lines were not drawn, and the issues often discussed were parochial cries of "Mainland *vs.* Island," with echoes of Canada and anti-Canada occasionally mingling in the contest. A narrow partisan spirit is to be avoided, and some division on broad issues affords more scope to public men. As it was, governments changed and shuffled more rapidly for a number of years than we can outline in an ordinary history, and some of them, in any case, did not influence very much the general trend of things.

Attorney-General Walkem, a member of a widely-known British Columbia family, went to England to petition the Home Government,

in view of what was called "the breach of the terms" of Confederation by the Dominion. Walkem met Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and as a result the latter wired Lord Dufferin, then Governor-General, the famous "Carnarvon terms," which promised a transcontinental railway by 1890 and certain local public works. This action was satisfactory in the meantime to British Columbia. Then came more delay in beginning the mountain section of the railway, and the people of British Columbia became bitter, and some threatened secession. Lord Dufferin visited the province about this time and, being the representative of Her Majesty, refused to go under an arch in Victoria inscribed with the words "Carnarvon terms or separation." This angered some, but, on the whole, the visit of the great diplomat did much to alleviate the agitated situation.

But better days were at hand. A new company took hold of the railway, and the Dominion having swung into a cycle of prosperity in 1878, the House of Commons, in May, 1879, resolved, on motion of Mr. (later Sir) Charles Tupper, "that it is necessary to keep good faith with British Columbia, and commence the construction of the (transcontinental) railway in that Province as early as is practicable." The Onderdonk section of the Canadian Pacific was soon begun, Chinese being imported to do much

of the work; and such was the energy of the directors of the railway that the road linking British Columbia with the East was completed five years before the promised period, the last spike being driven by Mr. Donald A. Smith (Strathcona) on November 7th, 1885. The completion of the railway removed from politics the task of "fighting Canada," which had been a sort of popular undertaking with some British Columbia public men, though it is only fair to these men to say that they had considerable ground for their attitude, and that, as a matter of record, Canada has taken out of this province a great deal more than she has ever put into it to this day.

To attempt a detailed account of the local governments which came and went with kaleidoscopic swiftness in British Columbia for many years till stability was reached, would not only take us beyond possibilities of ordinary book space, but it would add little to our understanding of the present day. Able, sincere and enthusiastic men were plentiful enough, but, as there were no political party lines until 1903, the only bond that held men together was the personality or the standing of the Prime Minister for the time being, and in consequence there was incessant change. In the period from 1898 to 1903, for instance, there were five governments, headed respectively by the Hons. J. H. Turner, C. A. Semlin, Joseph Martin,

James Dunsmuir, and Colonel Prior. Before that period the Hons. John McCreight (1871-1872), Amor De Cosmos (1872-4), G. A. Walkem (1874-6 and 1878-82), A. C. Elliott (1876-8), R. Beaven (1882-3), William Smithe (1883-7), A. E. B. Davie (1887-9), John Robson (1889-92), and those above mentioned, were amongst the leaders. In 1903 the Prior Ministry was dismissed by the Lieutenant-Governor following an investigation as to the letting of certain contracts, and the Hon. Richard McBride was called on to form a government. McBride was a native son of the province, a man of fine appearance and genial manner, and affectionately called "Dick" by almost everybody. As he had grown up in British Columbia, he, with keen understanding of the situation, felt that a division of the Legislature on party lines would lead to greater continuity in the work of administration. He accordingly took that stand, and formed a Conservative Government as follows:

Hon Richard McBride, Premier; Hon. A. E. McPhillips, Attorney-General; Hon. R. G. Tatlow, Minister of Finance; Hon. Charles Wilson, President of the Council; Hon. R. F. Green, Minister of Mines; Hon. A. S. Goodeve, Provincial Secretary.

With changes in the *personnel* of his Cabinet, McBride remained in power until 1915, when he resigned to take the office of Agent-General





HON. W. J. BOWSER, K.C.  
Former Premier of British Columbia.



for the Province in England, where, after a lingering illness, he died in 1917, much regretted by a large circle of personal friends.

McBride did important service for his native province, especially in the direction of securing "better terms" from the Dominion and the extensive building of good roads throughout the province; but the closing years of his administration indicated that the "boom" spirit which prevailed for years had led to too heavy expenditure.

He was succeeded in the premiership by his chief lieutenant, Mr. W. J. Bowser, a leading lawyer, whose great ability is generally recognized by all parties; but the McBride-Bowser Government was unfortunate in being in power in times of inflated prosperity, when the gambling spirit was abroad in the land; and under the charge that they had fallen into the general habit of unreasonable extravagance in matters of administration, the Bowser regime came to end, for the time being, at least, in 1916. The special distinction of Mr. Bowser's short reign was his sending to the people, with the support of all parties, referenda on prohibition of the liquor traffic and the franchise for women. Both these carried, although there was a shameful effort made by the liquor men to steal a majority by manipulating the soldiers' vote abroad. Mr. H. C. Brewster, who displaced Mr. Bowser as Premier, being personally and,

from the standpoint of his Government, friendly to prohibition, sent a special commission overseas to investigate. This commission reported back to the Legislature in no uncertain terms, the chairman, Mr. Whiteside, member for New Westminster, making a strong address in condemnation of the practices of the liquor agents; and forthwith Mr. Brewster put prohibition on the statute book, with the concurrence of Mr. Bowser and every member of the House, save one. So this western frontier province, with its seaports, mining camps, logging enterprises, and a good deal of the flotsam and jetsam of human life, took its stand with the other provinces in helping to make the Dominion bone-dry. With the women's franchise in force, it is practically certain that in Canada the liquor system has had its day and ceased to be for all time.

Mr. Brewster, on taking office, faced a task of unusual complexity, and his determination to abolish party patronage made that task more difficult through a certain amount of disaffection in the house of his friends. But he was giving such ample evidence of ability, straightforwardness and clean, impartial administration of affairs, that there was profound and widespread grief when, on returning from a strenuous trip to Ottawa on national affairs, he succumbed to sudden illness and passed away





THE LATE HON. H. C. BREWSTER  
Premier of British Columbia Until His Recent Sudden

in March, 1918. His state funeral in Victoria was a great demonstration of public esteem.

Mr. Brewster was succeeded in the premiership by the Hon. John Oliver, who was his Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Oliver is English by birth, but came early to British Columbia, where he became a successful farmer on the Fraser River. He is a man of immense energy and industry, as well as a skilled parliamentarian. Of strong moral convictions and fearlessness, he is generally considered to be properly entitled to the soubriquet "Honest John," and his handling of public questions suggests a strong resemblance to the late Premier Whitney of Ontario, who was "bold enough to be honest and honest enough to be bold." At the present hour he is engaged in a strong effort to make the revenue meet ordinary expenditure, and is paying special attention to opening up the country to Fort George and the Peace River country by the completion of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, which was a somewhat embarrassing but important legacy from his predecessors in office. The Dominion Government should help in this railway enterprise, and Premier Oliver may be relied on to tell them so in plain terms.

North of this province is the Yukon Territory, where Chief Factor Robert Campbell made his explorations in 1837, and where Chief Factor Hunter Murray built Fort Yukon a few

years afterwards. Neither of them were anxious about gold; but in 1898 the "strike" was made, and there was a rush to the place to an extent which was perhaps unprecedented in history. Dawson City was the centre, and the sudden wealth that poured in upon men sent thousands into a general orgy of extravagance and worse. Then the boom died out, and the mines have largely passed into the hands of large concerns which use hydraulic machinery. Thousands of men have come out, but there is still a considerable population in the country. The Yukon is unorganized territory, but it is part of Confederation and has its Governor and elective Legislative Council, as well as a member in the House of Commons.

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And so the dream of the Fathers of Confederation has been realized, and the Dominion has been rounded out to embrace all the western British possessions; and we venture to say, after witnessing the changes that have taken place since Manitoba entered in 1871, that Confederation has been a good thing for the West. The more settled, staid and orderly East, with its long history, has had an edifying, as well as a steadying, influence on the West. The East has given us generously of her best to found our institutions, in civil as well as in religious and educational life. Through many decades of experience the East gathered a

wealth of ideas from which we in the West have richly profited in thought and action. No public man could get five minutes' hearing from an audience west of Lake Superior if he began to advocate the shattering of Confederation into its original fragments. We are united indissolubly, because we have found the action and reaction of East and West upon each other a good thing; and in these recent years of the Great War we have been more closely drawn together by the tense struggle for human freedom, as men from both East and West have fought and died together for one flag and one Empire consecrated to the great task of making the world safe for democracy. And it will always be remembered to our credit that when the Coalition Government of Canada called for united action, and deadlock ensued between the older provinces, it was the loyal West which decided for Canada that other questions on which we have strong convictions could wait until we determined to support to the end the gallant lads who had gone to the front and performed prodigies of valor that had moved the world to admiration. When the war is over we shall take up the questions of tendencies and of evils that must not be allowed to take root in this new Dominion. From this fiftieth year of Confederation, let our common country have a new birth of freedom and progress and hope.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.*

HISTORY registers approval of the old Hebrew prophet who said that the nation or kingdom which will not serve God shall perish. The world is a great burying-ground of the peoples who have, through their disobedience of Divine law, been compelled to bite the dust. Their high places are desolate; their towers of pride are levelled prone to the earth. Some of them reached an extraordinary height of literary and scientific culture; some of them swept the seas with conquering galleys, and others sent their trampling legions forth to subdue the world. Some attained to wonderful commercial greatness and others to unprecedented wealth; but nothing ever availed to keep alive the nation or people that despised the fiat of the Almighty. How is it with regard to our new empire in the West? Concerning the past we may speak with considerable confidence. The land has borne the distinct stamp of religion, partly because of the character of the early colonists and partly because the Churches have been wisely led in their efforts to keep abreast of the tide of immigration. The continuance of an aggressive Home Mission policy is one of the first



duties of all the Canadian Churches; and as we have finished our study of the civil and political history of the West, we propose to consider the religious and educational life of the country. It is not the purpose of this chapter to give a detailed account of what each Church has done up to date. That task falls to the historian of each Church. In connection with the chapter on "Red River Folk" we have touched upon some points which we venture to recall, in some degree, in this general chapter covering the whole of the West and linking the early days with the main developments from the Red River to the Yukon throughout the years.

The first colonists in the Red River country were the Selkirk settlers, and these, being Presbyterians, maintained services amongst themselves as early as 1813; but notwithstanding the promises made to them on leaving Scotland, these people had to wait many years for a minister of their own denomination. In the meantime an elder amongst them, James Sutherland, was authorized by the Church to baptize and marry, but he was taken east in 1818, during the fur company troubles, and no settled congregational work could be undertaken. The Scotch settlers, while maintaining their own meetings, attended on Sundays the services of the Anglican Church, which, in the person of Rev. John West, began work on the Red River in 1820. This whole history of mutual

concession and co-operation on the part of the Anglican Church and the Presbyterian settlers is highly creditable to both. It was well understood between them that the arrangement would not be permanent, because the Selkirk settlers never ceased to expect that the minister promised might walk in upon them any day; but they recognized the importance of keeping alive the ordinances of public worship. Church-going is not religion, but religion does not live long without it in the case of those who are able to attend and are within reach of services. Experience, both east and west, justifies that assertion; and the whole matter of carelessness in this regard reacts with deadly precision on the young who are growing up around us. The Church keeps vivid the idea of God, and that is the idea which stands between this world and anarchy. Hence the Church should be maintained.

Following the early French explorers, the Roman Catholic Church sent two priests, Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin, to the Red River in 1818. These shortly afterwards began settled work on the east side of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine, and their parish was called later by the name St. Boniface. This has remained ever since that time the centre and seat of the work of that Church in the West. A young priest, Alex. Taché, of the Oblates Order, who came in

1845 to the West, succeeded Provencher, who died in 1853. Bishop Taché ultimately became archbishop over the whole Church in the country. He was a man of gentle, lovable disposition, and had unbounded influence over his own people. Essentially and by disposition a man of peace, he had great force of will and energy in following plans he considered in the interests of the work over which he presided. One might not agree with him, but one who knew him was sure to respect him for his unblemished character and the simplicity of his life. The Roman Catholic Church has pushed its work with great vigor amongst the aboriginal tribes all over the West, and men like the late Father Lacombe did excellent service in exerting their power for peace when the spirit of rebellion was abroad.

Reference has already been made to the Church of England beginning work on the Red River in 1820, under the Rev. John West, who built a school and church at St. John's. In 1824 he was joined by the Rev. William Cochrane, who opened parishes farther down the river, at St. Paul's and St. Andrew's, and still later at St. Peter's, near Lake Winnipeg. His labors were unceasing, and he deserves special place in the enumeration of forces for good in the early days. The Church began speedily to extend its work to other points, men like McCallum and Cowley being amongst the early

workers in the school and mission field. In 1844 the Bishop of Montreal visited the Red River country and saw that the work should be carried on with an increased force. Henry Budd, catechist, afterwards ordained, and Archdeacon John Hunter, a noted preacher sent out by the C.M.S., were added to the staff, and in 1849 the diocese of Rupert's Land was established, David Anderson being consecrated its bishop in Canterbury Cathedral. When he arrived in the Red River he established headquarters at St. John's, where the cathedral, opened in 1862, remains to this day. Mr. McCallum died in October, 1849, the day on which Bishop Anderson arrived in the country. The bishop took charge of the "McCallum" school, in addition to his other duties, and from this school came men like John Norquay and others, who did distinguished service in the West. After doing most important work Bishop Anderson returned to England and resigned in 1864, when he was succeeded by Dr. Robert Machray, a very distinguished Fellow of Sydney College, Cambridge. From that time till his death, in 1903, the labors of Bishop Machray were unceasing, abundant and far-reaching in their results on the history and life of the country. His vast diocese was afterwards subdivided, and those of Saskatchewan, Qu'Appelle, Moosonee, Athabaska, Mackenzie River and Calgary formed





HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. S. P. MATHESON, D.D.,  
Archbishop of Rupert's Land.

out of it. In 1866 the bishop was joined by the Rev. John McLean, who was a very able preacher, and who afterwards became the first Bishop of Saskatchewan. The bishop, with Archdeacon McLean and the Rev. S. Pritchard, re-organized the "McCallum-Anderson" school, and made it a great success. Bishop Machray took an active part in the affairs of the country, and was one of the factors in the peaceful solution of the Riel troubles in 1870. He afterwards became Archbishop of Rupert's Land, and later Primate of all Canada. He took a leading part in the formation of the University of Manitoba, of which he was chancellor from its beginning till his death. In the course of his years of service the country opened up in all directions, and the Church of England nobly did her part in sending missionaries to all parts of the "New West" and as far north as man could live. During the year preceding his death the Rev. S. P. Matheson, who had been, practically from his childhood, connected with St. John's, was elected coadjutor bishop, and in 1905 was elected Metropolitan of Rupert's Land with the title of Archbishop. Archbishop Matheson is an Anglican through being adopted at an early age into a family of that Church. He comes of the old Scotch Presbyterian colony on the Red River, where he was born, and two of his brothers are elders in the Church of his

ancestors. He is one of the very ablest men in the West, a sound administrator, an inspiring preacher, and a loveable, genial man. He is now Primate of all Canada, and highly respected. The Church of England in Canada created the office of General Field Secretary for Missions in 1902, and since that time has depended less on contributions from the Mother Country for its mission funds. The whole Church of England in Canada has had a General Synod since 1893.

The Presbyterians, who, as colonists, were first on the ground in the West, had to wait until 1851 for a minister of their own; then the Rev. John Black arrived, and found that the people had for thirty-seven years been so careful to maintain their religious training that three hundred of them were ready to unite in full membership. Mr. (later Doctor) Black was an ideal pioneer, strong physically, morally, mentally, a mighty man in the pulpit, a faithful friend in private life. He was everything to the Scottish colony of Kildonan, and has left his name indelibly stamped on the history of the West. Under his ministry was built the famous stone church, still in service, with its now noted cemetery, where rest the Presbyterian makers of the country. From Kildonan missionary enterprises were undertaken, the most notable being the sending of the Rev. James Nisbet out amongst the Indians of the Saskatchewan. This



devoted man founded a mission named Prince Albert, now a thriving city, and became the first of the band now doing great service amongst the native tribes. Rev. John McKay, a native of the plains, and in the early days a noted buffalo hunter, mentioned in a former chapter as guide for Lord Southesk, became a most successful missionary, assisting Mr. Nisbet, and a great power for peace amongst the Indians on the Saskatchewan.

The Presbyterian Church has made up for its early dilatoriness in sending a minister to the Selkirk settlers by becoming in these later years one of the most aggressive and powerful church organizations west of Lake Superior. This has been due, in part, to the fact that the earlier settlers belonged to that body, that Kildonan became a missionary centre, and that the pioneer ministers were intensely active in the work; but in large measure it is due to the fact that a man of unusual qualifications as a church statesman and organizer, an enthusiast and seer all in one, became the leader of the missionary movement in the West. This man was the Rev. James Robertson, who was called from the pastorate of Knox Church, Winnipeg, to be Superintendent of Missions. He had such immense energy and zeal that he roused others to action, moved church courts and congregations by his Celtic fire until the general forward movements began. The untiring force

he threw into the work told at length upon his iron frame, and he died in 1902, his body being laid to rest in the old Kildonan churchyard, on the edge of the great home field to which he had given his life. Succeeding Doctor Robertson, Dr. E. D. McLaren, of Vancouver, took charge of the office, doing good service, while Doctor Carmichael, of Regina, and Doctor Herdman, of Calgary, two of the most devoted men the Church has ever known, gave their lives in a consecrated effort to cope with the increasing work. Then Rev. Dr. A. S. Grant, our pioneer missionary to the Yukon, took hold of the work, called on the Church for ten missionary superintendents to meet the growing needs, and, in a masterly and statesmanlike way, put things on a new footing. The effect of his efforts will long abide.

The Methodist Church, from about the year 1840, had noted missionaries, such as Rundle and Evans, to the "farther West" and North. The great distinctiveness of this period was the invention, by Mr. Evans, of an Indian syllabic which brought the Scripture and the hymns into a written language, which the Indians could easily learn. Rev. George McDougall went out to the foothill country not long afterwards, and after devoted and successful work, met death in a blizzard on the plains. His son, Rev. John McDougall, followed in the good work, wrote many helpful books, and did fine

service as chaplain and scout with our Calgary column in Riel's day. It was not until 1869 that the Methodist Church began work on the Red River, by sending thither the Rev. George Young, who is noted as being the founder of the work of his Church in Manitoba, and as being the spiritual adviser of Thomas Scott when he was shot in 1870 by order of Riel. The Church has been exceedingly active during these years, and has gone everywhere with its missions over the whole West.

The Baptist Church, though coming late into the field has proved a vigorous force in the life of the West, while the Congregational body has maintained in the larger centres influential individual congregations. The Salvation Army deserves mention for its devoted and far-reaching work amongst the homeless and the helpless of western cities and towns.

The church life of Alberta and Saskatchewan is practically the overflow from the older province of Manitoba, and does not need separate treatment. All the Churches are doing excellent work, and there is cordial co-operation in efforts for the good of the country.

The work of the Churches in British Columbia grew up separately, and the early missionaries reached their fields either around Cape Horn or by way of the Western Pacific States, hence some special mention of the religious development of that province is required.

The Anglican Church, whose ministers were chaplains to the Hudson's Bay Company, were first on the ground, as we hear of the Rev. H. Beaver at Fort Vancouver in 1836. The Rev. R. J. Staines came to Fort Victoria in 1849, and the Rev. E. Cridge (afterwards Bishop) reached there in 1855. Ever since that time the Church has held a very prominent place in the Pacific Province, and has done her full share of work.

The first Roman Catholic priest to begin regular work was Father Demers, in 1847, although Father Bolduc had come to Fort Vancouver in 1843 for a while. This Church has given special attention to work among the native tribes, but has very large churches and schools in the principal cities of the province.

The Methodist Church was at work in 1858, the pioneer being Dr. E. Evans, followed immediately by Revs. E. White, Ebenezer Robson, and Arthur Browning. The first Conference was formed in 1887, with Rev. E. Robson as first president. The Rev. Thomas Crosby, coming to Nanaimo in 1863, organized an Indian school, and afterwards became the most successful missionary to the Indians on the Fraser River, and later at Fort Simpson in the north. At Fort Simpson and other coast points he effected a complete transformation in the lives of the natives and introduced into their communities all the improved conditions of

civilization. Several revival waves swept the different districts, and proved of lasting value. The Methodist Church has remained active in all parts of the province, and has specially fine churches in the leading centres.

The first Presbyterian missionary, Rev. John Hall, came to Victoria in 1861, followed in 1862 by Rev. Robert Jamieson. The First Presbyterian Church of Victoria was the pioneer building of that denomination west of the Red River. Later on a number of ministers came from Scotland, the only survivor of whom is the Rev. Alexander Dunn, who has done faithful service over large districts on the Fraser River. The work of this Church is now extended over the whole province, and in 1903 the General Assembly of the Dominion held an eminently successful meeting in Vancouver City. This was the first nation-wide church gathering that ever assembled on the coast, and the effect was immediately felt in the increased vitality of western work.

Other Churches have come to British Columbia in later years, and on the whole there is much religious activity manifest. Several of the Churches have effective work amongst the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians in the coast and inland cities.

In the Yukon the Roman Catholics and the Church of England had work amongst the aborigines from an early date; but when the

great gold rush of 1898 was on, all the larger churches and the Salvation Army were on the ground.

The Canadian West is to-day the greatest Home Mission field on the globe. Up to date the work has been kept abreast of settlement, but with thousands coming into the country the resources and energy of all the Churches will be fully taxed. On their faithfulness and zeal must depend in large measure the future welfare of the West and, therefore, of the Dominion. They must not shrink from their responsibility. They must hold the ground they have, and win more. That is the only true progress.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *EDUCATIONAL HISTORY.*

LACK of education is a serious handicap. Men find that if, either through their own neglect or otherwise, they have failed to obtain an education in their earlier years, all the rest of life is affected prejudicially. It is not otherwise with a nation. No people can make the most of the resources of the country or cultivate the higher aims of life unless the educational idea has stood in the forefront of their activities. Here, as in the last chapter, we have reason to be thankful for the history of the West. From the earliest times education received careful consideration, and since the Church as such does not receive large credit for good from some directions, it may be well to remind readers that the Churches of the West built and maintained the schools and colleges from the outset. This splendid service by the Churches made possible the work of later educationists.

Soon after coming to the Red River, in 1820, the Rev. John West, of the Church of England, founded a mission school at St. John's for the Selkirk settlers, and for the children of

Hudson's Bay Company employees. This school was greatly improved by the Rev. John McCalum, who was a graduate of Aberdeen. Bishop Anderson further increased the prestige of the institution and practically made it into St. John's College. After Bishop Anderson's time it fell away for a time, but was re-organized by Bishop Machray, with Rev. Archdeacon McLean as warden. From that time forward the progress of St. John's College has been steady.

The Selkirk settlers made use of the McCalum school for some years, and then started one for themselves in the house of one of the colonists. When their minister, Rev. John Black, came in 1851, he gave the school a great impetus, and sent more than one "lad o' paints" to study abroad. Then the number of those desiring higher education grew to such an extent that the Presbyterian Church founded Manitoba College, in 1870, at Kildonan, though the institution was moved to the new centre, at Winnipeg, a few years later. Its early teachers, Doctors Bryce and Hart, took an important part in the making of the country. With a view to strengthening the department of theology, the General Assembly appointed Rev. John M. King, D.D., of Toronto, to be principal. Doctor King, who died in 1900, left a distinct impression on the life of the West. He was a born teacher, and had great executive ability. Under



his administration the college prospered greatly, the buildings were enlarged, and the debt cleared. Professor Baird, who had founded the Presbyterian Church in Edmonton, became Doctor King's principal helper as a professor in the college. Doctor King was succeeded by Doctor Patrick, a brilliant scholar from Dundee, who died a few years ago, since which time Professor Baird has been in charge.

The Roman Catholic Church, beginning its mission at St. Boniface about 1819, shortly afterwards began a school, which has grown into the important college at that point. Amongst its teachers have been many distinguished men, the most prominent in the public eye being Father Drummond, S.J., who is widely known as a learned scholar and accomplished orator. In this college most of the men of that Church who are going forward to the priesthood or the professions in the West get their training.

The Methodist Church established a college in Winnipeg, under the leadership of the late Rev. Dr. J. W. Sparling, whose executive ability and general popularity became embodied in a handsome Calgary grey stone Wesley College in a short time. Professor Stewart, a pioneer missionary on the plains, became Doctor Sparling's principal assistant, and is still one of the mainstays. Rev. Dr. Riddell is now principal.

The Baptist Church has a college at Brandon, under Principal McDiarmid, which trains their young men in the West for any of the professions.

The colleges of the several Churches, with the Manitoba Medical College, the Agricultural College being also in touch, form the University of Manitoba, which is so unique an institution on this continent that it deserves some special notice. Putting it in brief form, the University is constituted by an affiliation in one body of all the denominational colleges, together with the Medical College. It has been managed with such wonderful success and tact that all have worked in harmony, provision being made for different papers in certain subjects and for examinations in French as well as English.

The University was founded in 1877, when the Province of Manitoba was still very young and sparsely settled. The denominational colleges then in existence were St. John's, St. Boniface, and Manitoba College—Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian, respectively. The founder of the university was Hon. Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor, who, after consultation with the heads of these colleges, urged the Government to bring a Bill before the Legislature. The endowment was only \$250 a year, and the college professors, with graduates of other universities in British

countries, formed the body of the University, who examined the students sent up from the colleges. A bequest from Mr. A. K. Isbister, of London, England, a retired Hudson's Bay officer, an endowment tract of 150,000 acres of swamp land secured by Hon. John Norquay, together with Provincial Government support, have placed the University in a prosperous condition. Being the first university established in the West, it has done immense service in keeping up the standard of education in the new land. President MacLean is at the head of the institution.

Each of the three provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, now has its state university. The Alberta University, under the presidency of Dr. Walter C. Murray, is at Saskatoon; the Saskatchewan University, under Dr. Henry M. Torey, is at Edmonton; and the British Columbia University, under Dr. F. F. Wesbrook, is at Vancouver. All the western provinces have their high schools and Normals for teacher-training. To those who remember this country when it was a vast, almost uninhabited wilderness, the presence of all these institutions seems almost miraculous. It should be noted, too, that the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches have theological colleges at all the points that are university centres, and most of them have

training schools for the Indians in the several western provinces.

We have thus been led to the study of higher education by following the development of the church schools of the early days into colleges and on to the university. We followed this line so as to keep things in this direction distinct and clear. Now we come back to study the elementary or public school system in the different parts of the West. Here, as we travel, we shall find the route more intricate, and at times we shall pass through storm-belts on the way; but the subject in the western country affects the history radically, and will continue to do so in a way unknown elsewhere. Hence the necessity and importance of following the matter in detail.

Beginning with Manitoba, we find that previous to Confederation schools existed largely under the care of Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches. These schools were supported by the voluntary subscriptions of the people, supplemented by grants from the Hudson's Bay Company, which recognized the value and necessity of education in the country. In 1871 the first Provincial Legislature passed an Act constituting a Board of Education in two sections, Protestant and Roman Catholic, and making all necessary provision for the maintenance of separate schools. This was done, it was said, in pursuance of the fact that the Bill

of Rights presented by the people of the Red River to the Dominion Government had asked for the rights as to schools the Churches had by law or by practice at the time Manitoba entered Confederation. There were no rights by law, and in the long process of later litigation it was discovered that the original authentic and genuine Bill of Rights had not asked for rights that had been established by practice—the words “by practice” had found their way somehow into the document as the result of an afterthought on the part of some who were interested. In any case the Roman Catholic Church had no rights as to schools “by practice” which were not possessed by the Anglicans and Presbyterians.

It is well known that Mr. John Sutherland, member for Kildonan in the first Manitoba Legislature, made, along with Mr. E. H. G. Hay, of St. Andrew's, and others, an effort to prevent the separate school idea being made law, but the country was primitive and unused to these questions, hence the people made no general movement and the law was passed. It was not long before agitation against the system arose, and in 1876 the Protestant section of the School Board passed a resolution asking for the abolition of the separate system. But beyond some slight amendments the law remained the same until 1890, when Hon. Joseph Martin, Attorney-General in the Greenway

Administration, introduced and passed an Act abolishing separate schools and establishing a non-sectarian system of national public schools. This aroused the Roman Catholic leaders, and for six years the question was in the courts, from the first trial judge through all the stages to the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council. Bitter feeling was aroused all over the Dominion, and the Manitoba School Question became a species of public nuisance in that it dwarfed all other matters into forgetfulness. The Privy Council held that the province had a constitutional right to pass the Act of 1890. Then the Roman Catholics appealed for remedial action to the Governor-General in Council. Their right to make the appeal was fought out in the courts, and decided in the affirmative. Then Sir Charles Tupper and his Administration issued, on March 19th, 1895, the famous Remedial Order, practically requiring the Government of Manitoba to restore the school system as it was before the Act of 1890. The Legislature of Manitoba met in June, 1897, and, chiefly under the direction of the Hon. Clifford Sifton, who had succeeded Mr. Martin as Attorney-General, refused to obey the Remedial Order. Sir Charles Tupper stood by his programme to remedy the alleged wrongs of the Roman Catholics. He went to the country on the issue, and was overwhelmingly defeated by Sir Wilfrid

Laurier and the Liberal party, who stood for provincial rights throughout the contest. Shortly after this an arrangement was arrived at between the Laurier and Greenway-Sifton Government, by which the Act of 1890 was maintained in force, with some very slight amendments, the understanding being that the Act was to be administered in a conciliatory spirit. Ever since that time the school system of Manitoba has been national and unsectarian. It is quite well known that many Roman Catholic parents, realizing the superior advantages of the public school, have cordially accepted the situation; but the leaders of the Church have always declared their opposition to accepting the settlement as a finality, and have encouraged large numbers of their people to maintain their own schools, even at the cost of paying double taxes. The encyclical of the late Pope Leo was somewhat irenic in its tone, since it spoke of the justice of the claims of Roman Catholics, and advised continued effort, but practically told them to take what they could get and make the best of it. It is safe to predict that Manitoba, having tried both systems, will adhere to the unsectarian public school as best calculated to serve the highest educational interests of the people and promote homogeneity of life in the country.

The history of the educational system in Alberta and Saskatchewan is more involved,

because of the fact that they existed as Territories for some time before they became provinces; but the end of the school question there is evidently not yet reached, as is seen by recent discussions at Regina and elsewhere. Hence it is well to give a somewhat detailed statement in regard to the subject.

Prior to 1875 the Territories were but very sparsely populated, and, outside of the Hudson's Bay Company posts and the mission stations of various Churches, the inhabitants were largely of nomadic and unsettled habits. Up to 1872 there was practically no government, but in that year the Dominion Parliament, as already stated, passed an Act under which a Council was appointed to assist Lieutenant-Governor Morris, of Manitoba, in governing the country. This Council, which was increased in numbers the next year, did some useful work in quieting the unrest of the Indians, policing the plains, keeping Montana whiskey-sellers in check, and protecting the buffalo for some time from extermination; but they did not take up any such question as education. There was no population to demand it, except as above stated, and the Churches met the need. In 1866 the Presbyterian Church organized a school at Prince Albert, under Mr. Adam MacBeth, a teacher from the Red River country. When Chief Factor Christie came from the Mackenzie River District, a journey of some two thou-



sand miles and fifty-five days' duration, to Fort Garry, to attend a Council meeting in 1873, he made special mention of the flourishing Church of England mission and school at Fort Simpson, under Rev. (afterwards Bishop) Reeves. Mr. Christie also visited Providence and Isle à la Crosse, where he found Roman Catholic missions, and good work being done in schools for Indians and half-breeds by Sisters of Charity. The Methodist Church did practically the same kind of missionary and school work at different points as early as 1850. And thus the matter of education rested until 1880, when the Territorial Government, which had been established by Dominion Act in 1875, and given certain powers and duties in regard to education, took measures for the maintenance of schools. It will be well for us to follow the matter step by step from the date of this organization of government.

In 1875, by "The North-West Territories Act" (enacted by the Parliament of Canada), Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory, except such portions thereof as formed the Province of Manitoba and the District of Keewatin, were united in one district, to be called and known as "The North-West Territories." The Lieutenant-Governor in Council was given such powers to make ordinances for the government of the North-West Territories as the Governor in Council from time to time con-

ferred upon him; but such powers must not at any time be in excess of those conferred by the ninety-second and ninety-third sections of the B.N.A. Act, 1867, upon the legislatures of the several provinces of Canada. The creation of separate schools within these territories was provided for by section 14 of this Act. It reads as follows: "The Lieutenant-Governor in Council shall pass all necessary ordinances in respect to education, but it shall therein always be provided that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the Territories, or of any less portion or sub-division thereof, by whatever name the same is known, may establish such school therein as they think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor; and also that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish separate schools therein, —and in such case the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools shall be liable only to assessments of such rates as they impose upon themselves in respect thereof."

The first steps taken by the civil authorities for the support of schools is set forth in a circular by Lieutenant-Governor Laird, December, 1880, in which it is announced that financial aid will be given to schools complying with certain conditions as to attendance of pupils.

No reference was made to any class of school, separate or otherwise.

The formal establishment of the educational system of the Territories was accomplished by the Ordinance of 1885, passed by the North-West Council. As required by section 14 of the N.W.T. Act, this Ordinance made provision for separate schools. Thus were established two classes of schools—public and separate—each being either Protestant or Roman Catholic. In no case was a Roman Catholic compelled to pay taxes to a Protestant school, or a Protestant to a Roman Catholic school. The Ordinance of 1886 contained an amendment making it unnecessary to designate public schools as Protestant or Roman Catholic.

This system was placed under the control of a Board of Education appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. It consisted of five persons, two Roman Catholics and three Protestants, with the Lieutenant-Governor as chairman. It controlled appointment of inspectors, granting of certificates to teachers, and the general organization of schools. It was required to resolve itself into two sections—a Protestant and a Roman Catholic section—each having under its control and management the schools of its section, and the selection of a uniform series of text-books for its schools.

In 1888 the number of members of the Board was increased to eight—five Protestants and

three Roman Catholics. The Ordinance of 1891 amended and consolidated existing Ordinances. Of necessity it retained the original provisions for the establishment of separate schools.

By the Ordinance of 1892 the Board of Education was abolished, and a Council of Public Instruction constituted in its stead. It consisted of the members of the Executive Committee (Cabinet) and four persons—two Protestants and two Roman Catholics—appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. A member of the Executive Committee was the chairman. All the powers and authority vested in the Board of Education, and in each section thereof, were vested in the new Council, that is, practically in the members of the Executive Committee, since the appointed members had no vote. The Regulations of the Council, August, 1893, provided, with slight exceptions, for uniformity in texts, courses of study, training of teachers, and inspection.

The Roman Catholics, being dissatisfied with the powers conferred upon the Council of Public Instruction, and with the Regulations framed by it, petitioned the Governor-General in Council, December, 1893, to disallow, repeal, or annul the Ordinance of 1892. A Committee of the Privy Council of Canada, after careful consideration of the petitions, documents and

information supplied, found itself unable to grant the prayer of the petitioners.

In September, 1894, the North-West Assembly, after full consideration of the complaints preferred by the Roman Catholics, declined to change the system of inspection, to further extend the use of the French language in instruction, to abolish uniformity in text-books, or to change the mode of establishing separate schools.

The Ordinance of 1901, Chapters 29, 30 and 31, amended and consolidated existing Ordinances. Of necessity it retained the original provisions for the establishment of separate schools.

"The minority of the ratepayers in any district, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish a separate school therein; and in such case the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic school shall be liable only to assessments of such rates as they impose upon themselves in respect thereof." (Sec. 41.)

"After the establishment of a separate school district under the provisions of this Ordinance such separate school district and the Board thereof shall possess and exercise all rights, powers, privileges, and be subject to the same liabilities and method of government as is herein provided in respect of public school districts." (Sec. 45.)

By this Ordinance there was established a Department of Education, presided over by a member of the Government, with the title of Commissioner of Education. The Council of Public Instruction was abolished and an Educational Council created. The Department of Education has the control and management of all classes of schools. The Commissioner had the administration, control and management of the Department and the direction of its officials. With the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council he made regulations for the organization and inspection of schools, the construction of school buildings, the examination and training of teachers, the management of libraries and teachers' institutes, and the authorization of text and reference books.

The Educational Council consisted of five persons, at least two of whom must be Roman Catholics, appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The subjects for consideration by the Council included all general regulations respecting the inspection of schools, the examination, training, licensing, and grading of teachers, courses of study, teachers' institutes, text and reference books, and such other matters as may be referred to it by the Commissioner. It might also consider any question concerning the educational system of the Territories, and report thereon. Under the Ordinance it was the duty of the Council to advise,

but the power to act was vested in the Commissioner; that is, in the Government.

All schools must be taught in the English language, but it was also permissible for a School Board to arrange for instruction in any language other than English, subject to the regulations of the Department.

It was permissible to open school by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, but no religious instruction was permitted from the opening of school until one-half hour previous to its closing in the afternoon, after which time any such instruction permitted or desired by the local School Board might be given. Attendance is not compulsory during religious exercises.

In 1886, when the first official returns were made to the Board of Education, there were 76 schools in operation, with 2,553 pupils enrolled, and 84 teachers employed. At the close of 1903 there were 743 schools in operation, with 33,191 pupils enrolled, and 916 teachers employed. The gain recently has been very great. In 1903 there were erected 166 new districts, and 324 new districts in 1904. The growth of separate schools has been slow.

From 1893 to 1902, inclusive, Dr. D. J. Goggin, formerly principal of the Manitoba Normal School, now in the Ontario Department of Education, and one of the most widely-known educationists in Canada, was Superintendent of Education for the Territories. He,

along with Premier Haultain, was the guiding spirit in the development of education in the West during its formative period. To his energy, tact, technical skill and administrative powers are largely due the present advanced position in education, and the comparative smoothness with which the educational machinery was working. It is quite well known that the satisfactory way in which things ran up to the close of the Territorial *régime* was a matter of wise regulations in the Department rather than a question of the ordinances in force.

And now we come to the most recent, but, as many think, not the final phase of the question. The question of the Territories entering into Confederation had often been discussed, and in March, 1905, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who had just been overwhelmingly sustained at a general election, introduced the famous Autonomy Bill into the House of Commons. Though the autonomy question had been discussed, the character of the measure by which it would be inaugurated had not been before the public. Hence the appearance of the Bill, with somewhat drastic clauses establishing a separate school system in the new Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, caused considerable surprise in all directions. The Premier's speech in bringing forward the Bill indicated a desire for a thorough-going system of separate schools, with dogmatic religious instruction.



This was generally resented by all parties except the Roman Catholics. Hon. Clifford Sifton, who had been the champion of public schools in Manitoba, was Minister of the Interior at the time, but was absent from the country when the Bill was framed and introduced. It appears that he was not consulted in the matter of the final framing of the school clauses, and as he could not agree with the proposed legislation, he resigned office. The commotion became widespread, and the Government bowed so far to the rising storm as to modify the proposed legislation into a shape which they and their supporters claim to mean simply the perpetuation in the new provinces of the educational system in vogue in the Territories under the Dominion Act of 1875, and accepted generally by the ordinances passed by the Local Assembly. Hon. Mr. Sifton said he would support the modified clauses, "though without much enthusiasm and with considerable reluctance." He claimed that under the amended clauses the schools would be public schools in every sense except that the principle of separate buildings was adopted. Rather than defeat the Government and precipitate an unhealthy agitation in the country, he would support the amended Bill, though he asserted his belief that the matter should have been left to the new provinces.

Hon. F. W. G. Haultain, Premier of the

Territories, took a strong stand against both the original and the modified clauses. He claimed that the people of the Territories should have an opportunity of pronouncing on the matter for themselves, and said they had not been consulted. He said further that he, although the official representative head of the people, had been kept in ignorance of the intentions of the Dominion Government. He urged that the action of the Dominion was a direct violation of the principles of provincial rights as guaranteed in the matter of education by the British North America Act. He claimed that the authority of the Dominion over the Territories, as exercised under the Act of 1875, was merely provisional, and that in matters reserved to the provinces by the constitution such authority should cease as soon as the Territories became provinces. He submitted that the new provinces should not be bound beforehand perpetually to a system without their own consent. If their own Assembly had passed ordinances practically recognizing separate schools, they had done so of necessity under the provisional Dominion Act of 1875, which became law at a time when the Territories were unorganized, when people were few and had no representatives in Parliament at Ottawa. It was generally admitted that the system of education in the Territories had been made to work well, but many felt that the autonomy clauses would

open the door to sectarian aggression and at the same time would leave the people helpless for all time under a system which they had never inaugurated in the first place. On the other hand, Sir Wilfrid Laurier contended that the Roman Catholics should be protected in the rights they had enjoyed under the Act of 1875, and asserted that many had gone to the West under the impression that they were to have their own schools. The debate in the House of Commons was long and spirited.

Mr. (Now Sir Robert) R. L. Borden, leader of the Opposition, moved that the matter be left to the new provinces, and based his position on the constitutional argument. Outside the House the discussion was equally active. The *Toronto Globe*, the leading Liberal paper of Canada, at first strongly opposed the Government on the ground of provincial rights, and the *Toronto News*, ably edited by Mr. J. S. (now Sir John) Willison, the biographer of Laurier, took a strenuous position in favor of popular rights, and urged that the Liberal leaders were deserting the most fundamental principle of their party. In answer to a question, Mr. Christopher Robinson, one of the highest legal authorities in Canada, held that the Dominion Government were under no necessity to pass the educational clauses in the Autonomy Bill. Professor Goldwin Smith, eminent as a constitutional authority, wrote

that the control of the Dominion over the Territories in the matter of education was provisional and should cease when they became provinces. Petitions came by shoals into the House of Commons, the large majority of which were against the Bill. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the Territories had prospered educationally under the old system, and were not making any violent demonstration against the proposed legislation, which was too true. They were busy with other matters. Mr. Frank Oliver, the popular pioneer member for Edmonton, was appointed Minister of the Interior, and was returned by acclamation, although he admitted, with others, that, owing to the nature of the population in his constituency, the election was no criterion of the general opinion of the Territories on the question. Sir Wilfrid Laurier stood to his guns, and, as he commanded a large majority in the House, including all the members for Quebec except one, the Bill was put upon the statute book. For the last few years there have been rumblings of discontent in the Middle West, and some have taken a very strong stand in favor of a public school system, in order to meet the problem of unifying the different peoples that are coming into the country. Since the outbreak of the great European war this problem has become acute, and the school trustees of Saskatchewan, who met this year at

Regina, voiced their sense of danger in no uncertain way; and the end is not yet.

British Columbia has exercised great wisdom in connection with educational matters. The people of this province were left free to deal with the subject in the terms of the constitution, and they took hold of it with decisive ability. Accordingly this province has never been disturbed by any prolonged controversy on school matters, and any element that wished to introduce discord was promptly suppressed. The province, as mentioned in a preceding chapter, has hence missed the advertisement that came to some of her sisters in Confederation through "school questions," but she has reaped a good reward in being able to build up a splendid educational system, while at the same time keeping clear of dangerous sectarian strife. As a result her citizens live in the utmost harmony together, and the question of a man's religious denomination is not considered in connection with his aspirations after public office, provided he is otherwise fitted for it. The province, having thus settled satisfactorily this domestic problem, has been free to attend to other matters undisturbed by religious conflict.

The Hudson's Bay Company were the first sponsors of education in the old colony on Vancouver Island, although the schools first organized were under the care of their

chaplains, who were clergymen of the Church of England. The first of these chaplains and teachers was the Rev. R. J. Staines, who, with his wife, arrived at Victoria in 1849, and, with the assistance of the Company, organized a boarding-school. He was succeeded by the Rev. Edward (afterward Bishop) Cridge, who came to Victoria in 1855, and, with Mrs. Cridge, continued the work. Soon after this the Hudson's Bay Company established free public schools on Vancouver Island, with Mr. Cridge as Superintendent of Education. From a report he gave in 1861 to Governor Douglas there were three schools: Victoria (Mr. Barr, teacher), Craigflower (Mr. Claypole, teacher), and Nanaimo (with Mr. Bryant, afterwards the well-known Methodist minister, as teacher).

In 1865 Mr. Alfred Waddington became superintendent, but matters were not flourishing. After the union of the island and mainland colonies in 1868, Governor Seymour, who succeeded Douglas, refused to grant financial aid to the schools, and several of them closed. In 1869 there were only eleven schools in the whole colony, seven on the island and one each at New Westminster, Langley, Yale, and Sapperton. It is said that in that year not more than one-tenth of the children in the country had school opportunities.

But when the province finally came into

Confederation her legislature took hold of the subject. In 1872 an Act was passed organizing a non-sectarian public school system, and this has remained undisturbed ever since. A public school fund was set apart and a Board of Education appointed, with Mr. John Jessop as superintendent. In 1879 this Board was abolished and its duties transferred to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The Act of 1891 went still further in constituting the Executive Council a Council of Public Instruction, with general powers over the schools of the province. Since 1905 the municipalities have been called upon to bear a larger share of the support of their own schools, which, before that, were borne principally by the Government, except in cities, where only a certain per capita grant was allowed by the province after the year 1888. The different governments have been disposed to help education as liberally as the somewhat limited finances of the province would allow, and the excellence of the school buildings throughout the province is often remarked by visitors. This is true practically of the whole western country, which had the advantage of having no old buildings on its hands as a legacy from former generations.

Even the very newest parts of the West, such as the Yukon and the Peace River country, have shown an enthusiastic interest in the cause of education. Schools are established as soon

as there are enough settlers to form a school district, and high schools grow up when a centre of population comes into being. There was a time when the utilitarian side of education was emphasized more than what we might call the æsthetic. This was necessarily the case, even with the settlers' homes, where the problem of getting started in a new country was such that little time or means could be devoted to adorning houses or cultivating flower gardens and trees; but that era is now well over with, and the homes and the grounds of the people are showing every evidence of comfort and taste. And so, in the sphere of education, more attention is now given to music and the fine arts. When a western city school board, not long ago, decided that one item in a programme of retrenchment would be the dispensing with the services of the instructor in music, there was a storm of protest which led that board to change its mind swiftly; and this is well, because there is much wisdom in the saying, "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." A famous materialistic philosopher of the Victorian age confessed that his attention to dry-as-dust things was so absorbing that he had lost all desire for music and poetry and the fine arts generally. "Where there is no vision the people perish," and materialism is the enemy of vision. Hence it is a good thing that the West, with



all its prospects and possession of material prosperity, is not neglecting the gentler side of life.

The Great War will throw new educational problems upon us. Many a gallant lad will come back unfitted for his former occupation; and in nine cases out of ten, where he is able to do anything, he will infinitely prefer to be independent and self-supporting, despite the fact that he will properly be given an adequate pension. For him the best expert brains of the country must devise suitable technical and vocational training. The returned soldier is often the very flower of the community's manhood, and he is coming back into church and state to take a large share in moulding the destiny of the country.

It is a far cry from the little log schoolhouse of the frontier, with its rude benches, to the splendid buildings and the polished desks of the modern day; but if, remembering that of those to whom much is given much will be required, we shall strive to do our part as well as the teachers and pupils of the log schoolhouse and the people of the log church did theirs, we shall do nobly indeed. From earliest days in human history the star of empire has come steadily westward. Than this land of ours there is no farther West, and beneath the halted star, if we are true to the highest things, deeds of mighty Messianic significance will be born for the good of the world.













